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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

VILLIERS DE L'ISLE-ADAM AND W.B. YEATS:
THE ALCHEMICAL MODEL AND THE PHANTASMAGORIC IMAGINATION

by

Ⓒ MARY G. HAMILTON

VOLUME ONE

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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Villiers de l'Isle-Adam and W.B. Yeats: The Alchemical Model and the Phantasmagoric Imagination" submitted by Mary G. Hamilton in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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External Examiner

Date November 30, 1979

In loving memory of Margaret Hamilton

Time drops in decay,
Like a candle burnt out,
And the mountains and woods
Have their day, have their day.
What one, in the rout
Of the fire-born moods,
Has fallen away?

- W.B. Yeats

ABSTRACT

In order to determine whether the relationship between Villiers de l'Isle-Adam and W.B. Yeats was casual or fundamental, I examined their works closely and discovered that both writers turn from what Yeats calls the "illusions of our visible passing life" to seek instead the incarnation and epiphany of the active spiritual forces that Yeats terms the "immortal moods." As I moved from the most direct point of contact (Axël and the early works of Yeats) to the point where I expected the two writers most to diverge (L'Eve future and the later Yeats), I discovered that Villiers and Yeats remain much closer than I had supposed and that their works display a surprising continuity of theme and attitude.

Both Villiers and Yeats reject the myth of progress. They consider transformation to be the all-pervasive principle of existence. Although Villiers does not seem to share Yeats's early interest in explicit transformation or "Ovidian" metamorphosis, he and Yeats do choose common models for the "ever-new and ever ancient revelation" Yeats speaks of. The models they use, although ancient in origin, were revived under the impact of nineteenth-century science and technology. Villiers and Yeats both adopt the alchemical process as a model for transformation, and the phantasmagoria as a model of the transforming faculty, the imagination. In their times, the phantasmagoria had become a public spectacle in which magic lantern projections, figures and images increasing and diminishing in size, seemed to pass through and transform into each other. By the time I had reached the fifth chapter, I concluded that it was not an exaggeration to call the imagination, as Villiers and Yeats conceived it to be, the phantasmagoric imagination.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1894 William Butler Yeats described the French symbolists and their immediate precursors as the recipients of a "new current," a "new force."[1] They were writers, he said, who had "grown tired of the photographing of life" and had "returned by the path of symbolism to imagination and poetry, the only things which are ever permanent."[2] As participants in what in 1897 he termed "the new romantic movement,"[3] the French symbolists appealed to Yeats because they were involved in the valiant struggle "against that picturesque and declamatory way of writing, against that 'externality' which a time of scientific and political thought has brought into literature."[4]

Yeats states more than once that Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, the author of Axël, which he regarded as the "first great work of the new romantic movement,"[5] was an important influence on his work.[6] Axël fascinated him. In "The Trembling of the Veil," writing of the time when his friendship with Arthur Symons was blossoming in the early nineties, Yeats records:

> I had read Axël to myself or was still reading it, so slowly, and with so much difficulty, that certain passages had an exaggerated importance, while all remained so obscure that I could without much effort imagine that here at last was the Sacred Book I longed for.[7]

In February 1894, Yeats took a trip to Paris, armed with letters of introduction to Verlaine and Mallarmé.[8] While there, he attended the première of Axël, and when he returned home, he wrote an enthusiastic review of the play for The Bookman. The review was filled with what Yeats later described as "sentence after sentence of revivalist thoughts."[9] Yeats saw Axël as "a grim and difficult play," but "its mere grimness and difficulty," he wrote, "is a return to better traditions, it brings us a little nearer the heroic age."[10] Perhaps his highest praise of the play is contained in the following passage from the article:

> The final test of the value of any work of art to our particular needs, is when we place it in the hierarchy of those recollections which are our standards and our beacons. At the head of mine are a certain night scene long ago, when I heard the wind blowing in a bed of reeds by the border of a little lake, a Japanese picture of cranes flying through a blue sky, and a line or two out of Homer. I do not place any part of 'Axel' with these perfect things, but still there are lines of the adept Janus, of the Medusa Sara, which are near them in my hienarchy. Indeed the play throughout gives a noble utterance to those sad thoughts which come to the most merry of us, and thereby robs them of half their bitterness.[11]

While freely admitting that his French was bad, Yeats nonetheless insisted that Axël had a deep and lasting effect on him, one that thirty years later, in 1924, he acknowledged in the Preface he wrote to H.P.R. Finberg's translation of Axël:

> Before I went to Paris in 1894 I had read with great difficulty, for I had little French--almost as learned men read newly-discovered Babylonian cylinders--the Axel of Villiers de l'Isle-Adam. That play seemed all the more profound, all the more beautiful, because I was never quite certain that I had read a page correctly. I was quite certain, however, that it was about those things that most occupied my thought and the thought of my friends, for we were perpetually thinking and talking about the value of life, and sometimes one or other of us--Lionel Johnson perhaps--would say, like Axel, that it had no value. It did not move me because I thought it a great masterpiece, but because it seemed part of a

> religious rite, the ceremony perhaps of some secret Order wherein my generation had been initiated. Even those strange sentences so much in the manner of my time--"as to living, our servants will do that for us"; "O to veil you with my hair where you will breathe the spirit of dead roses"--did not seem so important as the symbols: the forest castle, the treasure, the lamp that had burned before Solomon. Now that I have read it all again in Mr. Finberg's translation and recalled that first impression, I can see how those symbols became a part of me, and for years to come dominated my imagination, and when I point out this fault or that--the monotonous piling up of pictures in the last scene, the too abundant debates with the Commander or with Janus--I but discover there is no escape, that I am still dominated. Is it only because I opened the book for the first time when I had the vivid senses of youth that I must see that tower room always, and hear always that thunder?[12]

Although his enthusiasm naturally cooled somewhat with time, as late as 1933, in a letter to Olivia Shakespear Yeats was still praising Axël as a sacred book.[13]

Yeats felt a special kinship with Villiers because he realized they were responding to similar pressures and shared similar interests. Both men were reacting against materialism, positivism, and the myth of progress. As a result they substituted their own myths, and were drawn into the vortex of secret societies and occultism. In Autobiographies, Yeats writes of his revolt against the nineteenth-century milieu:

> I am very religious, and deprived by Huxley and Tyndall, whom I detested, of the simple-minded religion of my childhood, I had made a new religion, almost an infallible Church of poetic tradition, of a fardel of stories, and of personages, and of emotions, inseparable from their first expression, passed on from generation to generation by poets and painters with some help from philosophers and theologians. I wished for a world where I could discover this tradition perpetually, and not in pictures and in poems only, but in tiles round the chimney-piece and in the hangings that kept out the draught. I had even created a dogma: "Because those

> imaginary people are created out of the deepest instinct of man, to be his measure and his norm whatever I can imagine those mouths speaking may be the nearest I can go to truth". When I listened they seemed always to speak of one thing only: they, their loves, every incident of their lives, were steeped in the supernatural.[14]

It was especially the mutual interest in the supernatural and the occult that drew Yeats to Villiers, the man he regarded as "the founder of the present spiritual movement in French literature."[15] Yeats was fond of quoting Rémy de Gourmont's statement: "Villiers de l'Isle-Adam . . . has opened the doors of the unknown with a crash, and a generation has gone through them to the Infinite."[16]

One consequence of the revolt of Villiers and Yeats against materialism and the popular nineteenth-century myth of progress was a fascination with transformation, which they both regarded as one of the underlying principles of existence. The mortal world of nature and the body, the immortal world of the absolute and the spirit, and the intermediary world of art that links the first two and participates in both worlds, are for Villiers and Yeats all marked by their relationship with transformation.

One type of transformation, alchemical transmutation, is especially important in the works of Villiers and Yeats. They adopt the alchemical process as a model for a variety of types of transformation, and they use and test the model to the point of satire.

Both writers are concerned with spiritual and artistic or imaginative transformation. Villiers is also interested in science and technology and their relationship to transformation, whereas Yeats is more concerned with cultural and political transformation. Both investigate the nature of perception, testing the reality of what seems to be simply illusion, and the illusory nature of what appears real. Although Villiers and Yeats revolt against photographic naturalism and the simplistic attitude that photography duplicates nature, they are both fascinated by certain aspects of photography and related technologies, particularly the phantasmagoria. In fact they adopt the phantasmagoria as an image, not only of the imagination, but also of the relationship between the mortal world of nature and the immortal world of the absolute.

In my first chapter I focus on Axël, a dramatization of spiritual transformation. The dominant symbolic pattern of the play is alchemical. The structure of Axël reflects the cyclic nature of the alchemical process and the three main characters, Axël, Sara, and Janus, represent what the alchemists consider to be the three constituent principles of existence: form, matter, and the link between these two. Under the influence of Janus, Axël and Sara submit to the operation of the Great Work and move through the seven stages of the subjective alchemical process to purification and transcendence. The symbolism of light and treasure and the liturgical framework of the play suggest the successful completion of their alchemical quest.

The alchemical process is also a model for the workings of the imagination and the creation of art. In Axël, theme and structure reflect the necessity of uniting craft and active imagination in order to accomplish the Oeuyre of both the alchemist and the artist. Villiers believes in the power of the symbol to evoke the infinite and in the sacred alchemy of the word, the reflection of the divine creative power. In the artist's role as missionary from and interpreter of the beyond, the function of art as Oeuvre and as Gesamkunstwerk is vital.

In Chapter Two I focus on the works of Yeats's earlier career when his interest in Villiers was strongest. From the beginning, Yeats was fascinated with transformation, both as an image of the creative process, and as a physical and a spiritual phenomenon related to what was to become one of his central themes: the eternal dialectic of opposites. Yeats's Celtic or legendary works treat the faeries and their domain, Tír-na-n-Og, as images of the ideal, of permanence and the Beyond. Paradoxically, transformation is associated both with the transitory world of mortal man and with the realm of the changeless. Metamorphosis is most common when the two worlds come into contact.

Yeats's attitude towards the ideal is ambivalent: despite his desire to escape the degenerative transformation that marks life in this world, he recognizes that there are dangers inherent in seeking transcendence. In The Secret Rose and Stories of Red Hanrahan, transitional works that establish a close association between Yeats's legendary and his more esoteric works, metamorphosis suggests Yeats's ambivalent attitude: transformation sometimes represents triumph, sometimes defeat. The stories about Red Hanrahan follow the alchemical pattern of initiation found in Axël. One of the stories in The Secret Rose, "The Binding of the Hair" presents a particularly interesting and complex figure in the poet Aedh, who, among other things, represents the philosopher's stone. He is both pure imagination and the product of imagination: the poet and his art as they seek to transform the world.

Yeats's esoteric works "Rosa Alchemica," "The Tables of the Law," and "The Adoration of the Magi," represent an early exploration of transformation, particularly alchemical, as an image of the creative process. The stories demonstrate Yeats's belief in the independent reality of thought and in the transformation not only of life into art, but of art into life--the power of the imagination to evoke the divine through symbols. The early esoteric works also examine one particular manifestation of the dialectic of opposites, the conflict of what Yeats terms objective and subjective, or primary and antithetical.

Yeats's play, The Shadowy Waters, closely parallels Villiers's Axël in theme, situation, characters, motifs, symbols, and elements of setting. Both plays illustrate a confrontation of two opposing worlds, their struggle for dominance over the hero, and the ultimate triumph of the ideal. The Shadowy Waters contains the germ of Yeats's theory of the "Mask," the dialectic of self and anti-self that culminates, with their union, in transformation to the eternal. Yeats's hero, Forgael, seeks spiritual transformation and access to the divine creative energy. The symbolism of the play emphasizes the alchemical nature of his quest. The play also explores the problem of illusion and reality, associating the question with the relationship between the natural world and the ideal.

In my third chapter I focus on Villiers's L'Eve future. In this novel, Villiers presents a special instance of physical transformation as an image of spiritual and creative transformation. The alchemical model in this case involves the creation of a homunculus, the living work of art. Although Villiers attacks the fo[illegible]nd sterility of positivist science in other works, notably Tribulat Bonhomet, in L'Eve future he demonstrates that the modern scientist may be a creative artist in the tradition of the ancient alchemists. Villiers explores the role of technology in penetrating to the supernatural and in gathering and preserving the divine Word and its earthly image--human art. L'Eve future is concerned with creating the complete unity of form and matter that is both true beauty and the symbol that evokes it. The alchemical process is the model for achieving the unity that results not only in a work of art, but also in the spiritual transformation of the one who strives to create the work.

Yeats himself was aware of a definite pattern in the images he chose to express his own counter-myth to the myth of progress: from the time of his earliest writings until the end of his career, his works contain images of eternal quest, destruction, and recurrence. Yeats observes the dialectic of opposites and their perpetual transformation one into the other at all levels of existence, from the individual, to the racial and the cosmic. In Chapter Four I focus on this dialectic as it is expressed in A Vision and the works that surround it.

Throughout his work, Yeats vacillates between choosing the joys and sorrows of terrestrial life and seeking escape from them. The search for freedom from the degenerative transformation of this world leads to a number of possible solutions, all of which reply to negative transformation by means of positive. One may either seek renewal in a perpetual return to mortal life, or desire complete escape from mortality. Yeats's theories of the Great Wheel of existence and of reincarnation are analogues of the alchemical rota and transmutation. The ordered progression of incarnations determined by the pull between primary and antithetical forces depends in large measure on the success of the purgation that takes place between lives--a purgation that closely parallels the alchemical process in its stages.

Escape from the wheel of incarnation may involve escape either into or out of form. In the Byzantium poems Yeats chooses the first path, opting for the immortality of art. The creative process described in A Vision and expressed in the Byzantium poems is the same purgative and transformational process involved in reincarnation. Because art is a reflection of the divine ideas, it may lead to transcendence. The creative process provides an image of the transformation of the purified soul and its rebirth into eternity through the perfect union of form and matter that Yeats terms Unity of Being.

Although Yeats considers the possibility of escaping from the Great Wheel, in balance his work is more concerned with life on the wheel and the transformations it involves. The fictional superstructure Yeats created for communicating his vision plays a central role in determining that balance.

My final chapter is a brief introductory exploration of the use of the term phantasmagoria by Villiers and Yeats. It is by no means designed to exhaust the topic, but merely to suggest how central this image is in their work.

CHAPTER ONE

THE ALCHEMICAL QUEST: AXEL

Introduction

Villiers de l'Isle-Adam began writing long before the "symboliste" coterie was organized in 1886 under the banner of Jean Moréas's manifesto in Le Figaro.[1] Yet Villiers shared many of the aims and interests of the symbolist movement which, according to Yeats, "never mentions an external thing except to express a state of the soul."[2] In fact, Villiers's play, Axël, has been termed the bible of symbolism.[3]

One of the dominant prescriptions of the symbolist movement was an insistence that literature move away from the explicitness of statement and rely instead on the suggestiveness of symbols, especially private or esoteric symbols. Although Villiers does not move to the extreme of closed symbolic patterns found, for example, in Mallarmé's Igitur or Hérodiade, in Axël he does present his audience with a symbolic system that is recondite and hermetic in the original sense of the word.

On February 28, 1884, Villiers delivered a lecture on Axël in which he emphasized the unusual nature of his play:

> Je me propose de vous lire quelques pages d'une étude de littérature dramatique où, par exception, il se trouve que "l'intrigue," les "caractères" et l'action théâtrale, ne sont que d'intérêt secondaire.

> Ce qui s'y impose comme seul digne de l'attention du spectateur, ce qui, réellement, y est en cause et, au moins à quelques esprits, peut y paraître impressionnant, est de toute autre nature que la "pièce" elle-même, laquelle n'en est que le voile.[4]

This veil hides what is behind from the prying eyes of those Villiers scorned as "milliers de brutes humaines" (Axël, 159). Villiers has, however, so structured his veil that while it serves to conceal, like the veil of the Tabernacle it also serves to reveal that which is within.[5]

It is what E. Drougard labels "le caractère hiératique et dogmatique" of Axël that leads Villiers's audience to suspect this is a very special play.[6] Axël, Drougard says, "donne très nettement l'impression d'une sorte de mystère initiatique dans lequel Villiers a voulu exprimer une conception personnelle de la vie et formuler un enseignement."[7] Certain passages in particular contribute to this impression. Drougard points especially to the third part of the play and Janus's speech on the election of two races to vanquish "la double illusion de l'Or et de l'Amour" (Axël, 190). Janus concludes, "Le Voile et le Manteau, tous deux renonciateurs, se sont croisés: l'Oeuvre s'accomplit" (Axël, 216). The symmetrical structure of the play, with its four parallel parts, and its two sets of identical questions and responses--"Acceptes-tu la Lumière, l'Espérance et la Vie?" "Non" (Axël, 46, 212)--also suggest that Villiers's play moves towards a definite goal.[8]

But just what is this goal and what is the "Oeuvre" that Janus feels is being fulfilled? Janus points to the goal when he says that the double illusion of gold and love must be overthrown in order to establish "la vertu d'un Signe nouveau" (Axël, 190). Drougard believes that Janus is in the process of founding a new religion, a religion based on the conquest of the desire for the temporal, symbolized by gold (the Will to power) and love (the Will to exist)--the two forces that hold man to this life and separate him from the infinite.[9] Certainly there is a secret meaning hidden in Villiers's play which only a close examination of the symbolism can reveal.

The dominant symbolic pattern of Axël is based generally on transformation, and more specifically on the transformation of alchemy. On one level, Axël is a dramatization of the accomplishment of the alchemical process, the Grand Oeuvre. On a second level, the play is both a veiled statement of aesthetics and an attempt to achieve the great literary Oeuvre that the symbolists believed is the true goal of art.

One manifestation of the symbolists' quest for the transcendent Oeuvre was their fascination with Richard Wagner's concept of Gesamtkunstwerk, the union of all the arts in one supreme "total" art. Since Villiers was a wildly enthusiastic fan of Wagner, it is not surprising that Axël should exhibit many Wagnerian traits and adhere to the theory of Gesamtkunstwerk.[10]

Yeats shared Villiers's interest in the unity of the arts, "the association of literature, that is, with music, speech, and dance."[11] Since he also shared his interest in both the alchemical and literary Oeuvre, I shall begin my study of transformation in the works of Villiers and Yeats by examining Axël.

Scientific and Spiritual Alchemy

Alchemy is the source of major themes, images, and structural elements in *Axël*. Clues to the presence and importance of alchemical symbolism abound. In Parts II and III of the play, we learn that Janus and Axël are engaged in occult studies. From the alembics in the great hall of the castle, we suspect that they are actively involved in alchemical experimentation. Kaspar comments that Axël "donne, en toute réalité, dans l'Hermétique, la kabbale et les histoires de sabbat!" (*Axël*, 89). He speaks of the Grand Oeuvre and of "l'or potable," chastising Axël for playing at the Middle Ages to the point of resurrecting the old alchemists--"à grand renfort de cornues et de matras à tubulures"--and of dreaming he can fuse mercury and sulphur (*Axël*, 128).

The strong emphasis placed in *Axël* on gold and gold surrogates also suggests that alchemy is important to the meaning and structure of the play. The image of gold and its substitutes has a central role in each of the four parts. In the opening scene of Part I, Sara signs her family fortune over to the convent. In Part II, Kaspar is obsessed with finding the lost treasure of the German nation. In Part III, tainted by Kaspar's blood, Axël himself becomes obsessed with gold and demands to know whether he will be able to transmute metals. In Part IV (which contains a section entitled "L'Epreuve par l'Or et par l'Amour") the lost treasure is found. Alchemy is, then, a central concern in *Axël*; understanding the process and its symbolism is essential to the interpretation of the play's meaning.[12]

Both alchemy and the symbolism associated with it are complex. Axël wonders about the practical application of his studies, and asks Janus

> Pourrai-je transmuer les métaux, comme Hermès? disposer les aimants, comme Paracelse? ressusciter les morts, comme Apollonius de Tyane? Trouverai-je, moi aussi, les pantacles contre les Circonstances-fatales et contre les Terreurs-de-la-Nuit? les électuaires qui contraignent ou détruisent l'amour? le Magistère du soleil, par qui l'on gouverne les éléments? l'Elixir de longue-vie? comme Raymond Lulle, la Poudre de projection? comme le Cosmopolite, --la Pierre philosophale? Serai-je pareil aux mages de la grande légende? (*Axël*, 196-97)[13]

Janus's reply is a clear indication that alchemy must be interpreted on more than one level:

> Les "Mages" réels ne laissent point de nom dans la mémoire des passants et leur sont à jamais inconnus. Leur nombre, depuis les temps, est le même nombre: mais ils forment un seul esprit. Les songeurs que tu viens de nommer furent d'utiles, des sages mortels. --Ce ne furent pas des Délivrés. Les Mages réels, s'ils dédaignent de vivre, --se dispensent aussi de mourir. (*Axël*, 197)

In his *Clef universelle des sciences secrètes*, P.-V. Piobb defines three separate categories of alchemists:

> celles des *philosophes* qui étudient l'évolution de tout ce qui existe dans l'univers, celle des *sages* qui appliquent pratiquement les théories des précédents et celle des *chimistes* qui s'occupent des combinaisons évolutives de la matière.[14]

Among the "chimistes" are a group of investigators looked upon as a lesser breed--the "souffleurs,"

> les alchimistes qui s'adonnaient à la fabrication de l'or--laquelle n'était que symbolique pour les philosophes et les sages.[15]

Axël expresses interest in the material or exoteric side of alchemy, in the realm of the "souffleurs" and the "chimistes"; Janus tries to redirect him to the spiritual or esoteric side, the territory of the "sages" and the "philosophes."

The symbolic character and role of the end product of the alchemical process, gold, illustrate the duality implicit in alchemy. The most obvious interpretation of gold is as a conventional symbol for material wealth and power, for the worldly life of the senses. In this aspect it is a negative force in Villiers's play, the source of violence. Axël's father was ambushed and murdered for the treasure which later threatens his son's peace and his life. Because of the treasure, Sara attacks Axël and he himself is forced to kill Kaspar. Axël is contaminated by Kaspar's blood, the blood of a positivist who says himself that he represents worldly life: "Je m'appelle la vie réelle"; and "Je me contente . . . d'être seulement, un homme d'aujourd'hui" (Axël, 128, 169).[16] As Janus points out,

> La vapeur du Sang versé pour de l'Or vient de t'amoindrir l'être: ses fatals effluves t'enveloppent, te pénétrant le coeur--et, sous leur influence pestilente, tu n'es plus qu'un enfant, sachant des paroles. Héritier des instincts de l'homme que tu as tué, les vieilles soifs de voluptés, de puissance et d'orgueil, respirées et résorbées en ton organisme, s'allument au plus rouge de tes veines. (Axël, 190)

Renunciation of the gold in the first and last scenes of the play indicates renunciation of the life of this world. It is not, therefore, greed which motivates the Abbess to make Sara sign over her fortune: the Abbess is requiring of the novice a traditional symbolic act of renunciation which is to be repeated in the cutting of her hair during the initiation ceremony. This symbolic rejection of the life of the senses is taken to its logical conclusion in the deaths which occur in the play: that of Kaspar and those of Sara and Axël.

Alchemists are fond of the phrase "Aurum nostrum non est aurum vulgi."[17] It is perhaps not the case with the "souffleurs," but for the "Mages réels" the search for gold is a spiritual or psychological quest. As Axël tells Sara, "Ce qui fait la valeur de ce trésor est en nous-mêmes" (Axël, 266). The very characteristics of gold which render it so valuable in a material sense--its precious purity, beauty, and virtual indestructibility--make it an excellent symbol for everything that is innocent, exalted, eternal. Moreover, because of its colour, gold is closely associated with the sun and shares in its symbolism, suggesting divine wisdom and intelligence.

In Dogme et rituel de la haute magie, Eliphas Lévi writes of the multiple meanings of alchemical gold. He indicates that alchemy has "une triple signification":

> Comme tous les mystères magiques, les secrets du grand oeuvre ont une triple signification: ils sont religieux, philosophiques et naturels.
>
> L'or philosophal, en religion, c'est la raison absolue et suprême; en philosophie, c'est la vérité; dans la nature visible, c'est le soleil; dans le monde souterrain et minéral, c'est l'or le plus parfait et le plus pur.
>
> C'est pour cela qu'on appelle la recherche du grand oeuvre la recherche de l'absolu, et qu'on désigne cet oeuvre même par le nom d'oeuvre du soleil.
>
> . . . .
>
> L'art hermétique est donc en même temps une religion, une philosophie et une science naturelle.[18]

Alchemical experimentation involves more than the attempts of the "souffleur" to transmute actual base metals into real gold. On a higher plane, alchemy is a process symbolic of spiritual transmutation during which the base metal of impure, mortal man is transformed into the pure gold of the redeemed immortal, the "Délivré," as Janus calls him; or, in psychological terms, the fragmented, undeveloped personality is transmuted into the unified, fully realized self.[19]

Seen as a symbol of spiritual wealth, gold is desirable and a positive factor in Axël. It is significant that gold and its surrogates play important roles in the two ceremonies in *Axël* in which the worldly life is to be rejected and the spiritual chosen. The first is the ceremony in the convent for which Sara wears the sacred opal necklace and is covered with a sheet dotted with golden tears. The second ceremony takes place in the vaults of Axël's castle where, surrounded by the treasure, Sara and Axël drink poison (hidden in Sara's gold ring) from a goblet encrusted with jewels. For the occasion, Sara adorns herself with diamond necklaces taken from the treasure.[20]

The alchemical process is a cyclic one frequently represented by the emblem of the Uroboros or snake swallowing its own tail, for "Hoc autem magisterium ex una primum radice procedit quae postmodum in plures res expanditur et iterum ad unam revertitur."[21] Jung describes the alchemical concept of "Mercurius," which is closely related to the Uroboros:

> Mercurius is the divine winged Hermes . . . manifest in matter, the god of revelation, lord of thought and sovereign psychopomp. The liquid metal, *argentum vivum*--"living silver," quicksilver--was the wonderful substance that perfectly expressed the nature of the στίλβων; that which glistens and animates within. When the alchemist speaks of Mercurius, on the face of it he means quicksilver, but inwardly he means the world-creating spirit concealed or imprisoned in matter. The dragon [an image of Mercurius] is probably the oldest pictorial symbol in alchemy of which we have documentary evidence. It appears as the οὐροβόρος, the tail-eater, in the Codex Marcianus . . . which dates from the tenth or eleventh century, together with the legend, ἓν τὸ πᾶν (the One, the All). Time and again the alchemists reiterate that the *opus* proceeds from the one and leads back to the one, that it is a sort of circle like a dragon biting its own tail. . . . For this reason the *opus* was often called *circulare* (circular) or else *rota* (the wheel). . . . Mercurius stands at the beginning and end of the work: he is the *prima materia*, the *caput corvi*, the *nigredo*; as dragon he devours himself and as dragon he dies, to rise again as the *lapis*. He is the play of colours in the *cauda pavonis* and the division into four elements. He is the

> hermaphrodite that was in the beginning, that splits into the classical brother-sister duality and is reunited in the coniunctio, to appear once again at the end in the radiant form of the lumen novum, the stone. He is metallic yet liquid, matter yet spirit, cold yet fiery, poison and yet healing draught--a symbol uniting all opposites.[22]

The structure of Axël reflects the cyclic nature of the Magnum Opus. Each of the four parts of the play presents a different route or Way to the golden goal. In each part there is a renunciation when the Way is rejected, either because it leads in the wrong direction or is a road that travels only part way to the goal. Thus one or the other of the two main characters renounces in turn "Le Monde religieux," the mystic Way of the cloister represented by the convent of Sainte Apollodora in Part I; "Le Monde tragique," the public Way of society represented by Kaspar and the court in Part II; "Le Monde occulte," the secret Way of intellect represented by Janus in Part III; and "Le Monde passionnel," the private Way of sensual love represented by Sara in Part IV. In the end there remains only "L'Option suprême," the final renunciation of all life in suicide.[23]

Alchemy is based on the philosophical premises of monism and hylozoism, which posit a single source for all of reality: a prime matter or hyle in which everything exists potentially until brought into the actuality of its own particular form. Piobb explains:

> Les Alchemistes disaient: la matière est une, il n'y a de différence entre le matériel et l'immatériel que le mode sous lequel l'un et l'autre de ces domaines nous apparaissent. L'évolution, résultant du mouvement général dans l'Univers, donne au matériel la possibilité de devenir immatériel et à l'immatériel la puissance de constituer le matériel.[24]

Alchemists, then, hold that everything evolves through a series of stages to reach its own particular level in the hierarchy of existence. Since it is only a special set of conditions that determine the degree of evolution, anything can be transmuted to a higher, more perfect state, given the proper conditions. The task of the hermetic scientist is to supply those conditions, to purify the informing "soul" and the material "body" of which everything is composed. Bon. Carra de Vaux describes the alchemist's task:

> In practice, the aim of the alchemist's efforts is to find the substance, a living substance, "elixir" or spirit, which, when combined with the body of the imperfect metal, previously prepared and purified, will change it into perfect metal.[25]

Since gold is the highest metal in the hierarchy, and it represents the sun which in turn signifies intelligence, according to Piobb "Ce qu'il fallait donc transmuter, c'était le 'principe intellectuel' existant en tout individu, de façon à développer l'Intelligence au point de lui donner son rayonnement complet."[26] This is what Villiers's play is all about.

Axël expresses the monist point of view as he has learned it from Janus:

> Homme . . . tu possèdes l'être réel de toutes choses en ta pure volonté, et tu es le dieu que tu peux devenir. --Oui, tel est le dogme et l'arcane premier du réel Savoir. (Axël, 192)

When Axël voices doubts about the price that must be paid to achieve perfection, Janus admonishes him:

> Les dieux sont ceux qui ne doutent jamais. Echappe-toi, comme eux, par la foi, dans l'Incréé. Accomplis-toi dans ta lumière astrale! Surgis! Moissonne! Monte! Deviens ta propre fleur! Tu n'est que ce que tu penses: pense-toi donc éternel. Ne perds pas l'heure à douter de la porte qui s'ouvre, des instants que tu t'es dévolus en ton germe, et qui te sont laissés. (Axël, 193)

A little later he urges Axël

> à n'être plus qu'une intelligence affranchie des voeux et des liens de l'instant, en vue de la Loi suréternelle. . . . La Loi, c'est l'énergie des êtres! c'est la Notion vive, libre, substantielle, qui, dans le Sensible et l'Invisible, émeut, anime, immobilise ou transforme la totalité des devenirs. --Tout en palpite! --Exister, c'est l'affaiblir ou la renforcer en soi-même et se réaliser, en chaque pulsation, dans le résultat du choix accompli. --Tu sors de l'Immémorial. Te voici, incarné, sous des voiles d'organisme, dans une prison de rapports. --Attiré par les aimants du Désir, attract originel, si tu leur cèdes, tu épaissis les liens pénétrants qui t'enveloppent. La Sensation que ton esprit caresse va changer tes nerfs en chaînes de plomb! (Axël, 198-99)

To shake off the leaden chains, to move up the hierarchy to the golden goal, Axël must resist the fatal attractions of Nature. Thus, Janus says,

> tu annuleras en toi, autour de toi, toute limite! Et, oublieux à jamais de ce qui fut l'illusion de toi-même, ayant conquis l'idée, --libre enfin, --de ton être, tu redeviendras, dans l'Intemporel, --esprit purifié, distincte essence en l'Esprit Absolu, --le consort même de ce que tu appelles Déité. (Axël, 200)

It is through the alchemical process that Axël will overcome this illusion of self and escape into the timeless as purified spirit.

Alchemists believe that everything in creation, including the human intellect, is composed of three constituent principles: the "fixed" Sol (active, masculine Sulphur or form); the "volatile" Luna (passive, feminine Salt or matter); and the "humide radicale" (hermaphroditic Mercury, the "principe de liaison" between the first two).[27] In alchemy, the body undergoing transmutation is broken into its constituent parts; the masculine and feminine components are purified and then reunited into a new and perfect whole.

In Axël, the three main characters, Axël, Sara, and Janus, are the three constituent principles of the esoteric body to be elevated from a state of imperfection. Their names give clues to their roles. Sara's is most obvious. Her given names--Eve Sara Emmanuèle--mark her as the archetypal female. As Eve, she is woman before the Covenant, both innocent and fallen: the original temptress and occasion of sin, the universal mother figure, and the woman who is moulded from without rather than being self-determined. As Sara, she is woman under the Old Covenant, mother of the Chosen People. As Emmanuèle she is redemptress under the New Covenant.[28] During the religious ceremonies of Part I, Sara wears "le collier d'opales sacrées" (Axël, 34), and according to Pierre Mariel, "L'opale est, par excellence, la gemme d'Isis, la Femme archétypique. Elle est irisée comme le manteau de la déesse de Saïs."[29]

Sara is Luna, the moon, the volatile or changing element so strongly associated with the earthly life and its attractions.[30] Her agonized cry, "Axël, Axël, m'oublies-tu déjà, pour des pensées divines?... Viens, voici la terre! viens vivre!" (Axël, 260) marks her as the life of the flesh incarnate. All the descriptions of Sara in the play support this conclusion; for example:

> Elle se suspend languissamment, la tête renversée et le regardant, avec des yeux de lumière entre ses cils; ses cheveux se dénouent, roulent et l'enveloppent. Elle parle d'une voix pure, très sourde, très douce, presque basse, oppressée. --Parfois elle ferme les yeux tout à fait et son éclatante beauté grave resplendit sous les lueurs du flambeau, de la lampe et des pierreries. --Haletante, les narines frémissantes, les bras languides. (Axël, 237)

Drougard suggests a number of possible sources for the name Axël, but concludes simply that Villiers probably liked the sound of the name because it resembles those of Hebrew angels.[31] This may be the case, but it seems to me to overlook a rather obvious play on words of the sort in which alchemists take delight.[32] The pun is plainer in English, but nonetheless present in French. Axël is "l'axe," the axis or axle of the play, the fixed element or Sun around which the volatile moves. It is Sara, the Moon, who journeys in search of the goal, her opposite. Axël remains immobile in his castle, the male principle towards which the female gravitates. In his discussion with Janus, Axël describes the process:

> Homme, si tu cesses de limiter une chose en toi, c'est-à-dire de la désirer, si, par là, tu te retires d'elle, elle t'arrivera, féminine, comme l'eau vient emplir la place qu'on lui offre dans le creux de la main. (_Axël_, 192)

Axël and Sara are opposites, two halves incomplete in themselves. They must be purified and united to achieve perfection. Janus, on the other hand, like his namesake the Roman god, embodies wholeness, perfection, and the mastery of all things.[33] He is Mercurius, the hermaphrodite, the alchemical _rebis_ or "paradoxical double being,"[34] the double-aspected magus, omniscient observer of two worlds: past and future, finite and infinite. Janus is the guardian of the door (_janua_) to the absolute. We should remember that the god Mercury is associated both with medicine and communication; Janus is a doctor with telepathic powers who serves as messenger to deliver the Auërsperg Book of Hours to Sara's convent.[35] He is the "principe de liaison" between the masculine and feminine elements. Having chosen their families "du fond des âges," Janus directs the action to determine that Axël and Sara are united "pour que soit fondée . . . la vertu d'un Signe nouveau" (_Axël_, 190). Drougard sees Janus's role as link between Axël and Sara to be so strong as to suggest he himself may have originally founded their two families. All three share a strange physical resemblance: "force et souplesse physiques, pâleur habituelle et lumineuse, longs cheveux bruns ondulés, beauté mystérieuse et puissance séductive."[36]

In the passage on Mercurius quoted earlier, Jung writes of him as the "_nigredo_" and "the play of colours in the _cauda pavonis_." The description suggests the importance of colour symbolism in the alchemical process: the _nigredo_ or _melanosis_ (blackening) is the first of four colour stages in alchemy mentioned by Heraclitus, and the _cauda pavonis_ or peacock's tail is the "combination of all colours, symbolizing wholeness."[37] The three colour stages following the _nigredo_ are: _leukosis_ or _albedo_ (whitening), _xanthosis_ or _citrinitas_ (yellowing), and _iosis_ or _rubedo_ (reddening). Around the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries, the _xanthosis_ was to all intents and purposes dropped, reducing the colour stages to three preceding the final transmutation to gold.[38] Black at the beginning of the alchemical process represents the darkness of chaos, the _prima materia_, the womb from which the potential, the base metal, will be born to perfection. The colour white signifies the first transmutation, the stage of spiritual purification. Red indicates the second transmutation, into sulphur. As we might guess, on the spiritual plane it represents passion.[39]

The Seven Alchemical Stages

According to Piobb, the "intrinsic" or subjective alchemical process moves through seven stages or operations: calcination, putrefaction, solution, distillation, conjunction, sublimation, and philosophical coagulation. The colour changes occur within these seven stages, which are associated with the seven ancient planets: Moon, Saturn, Mars, Jupiter, Venus, Mercury, and Sun.[40]

Calcination, the first alchemical operation, is oxidation by heat. Piobb quotes Pérnety's Dictionnaire mytho-hermétique on the subject:

> Purification ou pulvérisation des corps par le moyen du feu extérieur qui en dissout les parties en séparant ou en évaporant l'humide qui les liait.[41]

In calcination, then, the "humide radicale," the life force joining form and matter, is evaporated and there is a death, "une sorte de mort intellectuelle--que certains ont dite 'La mort du Profane'."[42] With this death comes a preliminary initiation as the material world is renounced and the first step taken into the Temple of the Magnum Opus.

On one level, that of the Auërsperg and de Maupers families, calcination takes place before the play begins, in the heat of Egypt when Janus "sut convaincre les deux chevaliers [de Maupers et Auërsperg] de substituer ces mystérieux sphinx d'or aux deux lions qui supportaient leur écusson commun" (Axël, 20). In giving up the worldly and powerful lion for the enigmatic and esoteric sphinx, the families commit themselves to Janus's occult plan.

On the individual level, Sara and Axël both undergo calcination during the play. Sara's initiation takes place in Part I and begins with her Rosicrucian studies. It continues with her renunciation of the profane when she donates her family fortune to the convent. Fire imagery recurs throughout Part I, supporting the suggestion that calcination is in progress. The play begins, for example, with an epigraph from Lamartine:

> Coeurs tendres, approchez: ici l'on aime encore!
> Mais l'amour, épuré, s'allume sur l'autel:
> Tout ce qu'il a d'humain, à ce feu s'évapore,
> Tout ce qui reste est immortel. (*Axël*, 7)

Part I also contains references to stars, lamps, candles, and various other forms of fire.

Axël's calcination takes place in Part II, when he confronts Kaspar "comme au milieu d'une forge, au centre des incessants reflets du foyer, des torches et des éclairs" (*Axël*, 143). This part of the play is set in the Great Hall of Axël's castle, at the foot of one of its towers. Now, the alchemist's furnace, the *athanor*, is shaped like a tower. Piobb connects it with the archetypical tower found in such myths as that of Danae, and the Tower of Babel:

> C'est la *Tour Eternelle* où l'on "chauffe"--en toute époque et de toute façon--les élèves évolutifs que l'on veut, pour leur bien, perfectionner au point qu'ils acquièrent un intelligent "essor". Elle constitue le pivot sur lequel évolue l'histoire de l'Humanité.[43]

Beneath this tower, Axël turns his inheritance over to Kaspar and rejects the commander's suggestion that Axël accompany him to court.

Axël's renunciation of the worldly life is the death of the profane which must accompany his initiation into the occult. This renunciation is finalized when Axël kills Kaspar, the representative of the profane. As Kaspar himself says, "Je m'appelle *la vie réelle*" (*Axël*, 128), that is, the worldly life. His name suggests just this, for it reminds the reader of Louis Bertrand's "Gaspard de la Nuit" (a darkly mysterious character who turns out to be the devil), and the evil hunter Kaspar who is in league with the devil in Carl Maria von Weber's opera *Der Freischütz*.[44]

Kaspar is also the name given in Christian tradition to one of the three wisemen or magi who visited the Christ-child on the Epiphany: specifically the young black king.[45] If this association is valid, we must see the confrontation between Kaspar and Axël as the failure of the revelation of divine truth to the gentile/non-elect world, for Villiers's Kaspar rejects the epiphany and consequently must die: he came in search of an earthly, not a divine, treasure, and was unable to get past Axël, "le dragon qui le garde" (*Axël*, 147).[46]

The calcination of Axël and Sara is linked with the black of the *nigredo*. For both the operation takes place in the darkness of a night suggestive of primeval chaos. The night of Part I, "pleuvieuse et glacée," is "affreuse, obscure, sans une étoile. Le vent siffle et rugit" (*Axël*, 57). The night of Axël's calcination is also marked by its stormy blackness.

From out of this dark chaos the purified will be born, and so references to the womb are associated with this initial stage in Axël's and Sara's transmutation. In Part I, the "Desservant de l'Office des Morts" chants the text of Saint Bernard for the Preparation for the Last Judgment, which includes the passage:

> Attende, homo, quid fuisti antè ortum et quod eris usque ad occasum. Profectò fuit quod non eras. Posteà, de vili materiâ factus, in utero matris de sanguine menstruali nutritus, tunica tua fuit pellis secundina. (*Axël*, 44)[47]

Later Janus tells Axël that

> les entités vibrent en l'infinie gestation de ce qui les totalise, et la Mort met au monde-absolu. Ton existence n'est que l'agitation de ton être en l'occulte utérus où s'élabore ton futur définitif, --ta conception décisive, --le devoir de te reconquérir sur le monde. (*Axël*, 204)

We learn that before the play began Sara had undergone the deprivation of the *in-pace*, a setting suggestive of the womb. After her rebellious "Non," the archdeacon attempts to return Sara to an *in-pace*: the tomb of Sainte Apollodora. The description of this tomb is interesting:

> Les larges degrés terreux d'une excavation sépulcrale apparaissent; la grande dalle reste ouverte sur ses arrêts, toute droite.
> [L'Archidiacre:]
> C'est ici la porte... *janua*... par laquelle j'ai droit de vous contraindre à entrer dans la Vie. . . .
> (*Axël*, 55)

Sara does not oblige the archdeacon by re-entering the chthonic womb, for she has already crossed the threshold of the Temple.

In the Great Hall of Axël's castle, the setting of his calcination, we find "d'énormes vautours et de grands aigles fauves . . . cloués, les ailes étendues" (*Axël*, 62).[48] The birds of prey suggest the alchemical *caput corvi*, the crow which because it is black is associated with primordial beginnings, and because it is a bird symbolizes "creative, demiurgic power and . . . spiritual strength."[49]

The ancient planet associated in *Axël* with this initial alchemical operation is the moon, symbol of the feminine aspect of hermaphroditic Mercurius, the womb in which transmutation begins, and from which the gold will eventually issue. It is Sara's silent but dominant presence that establishes the ascendency of the moon in Part I. In Part II the moon is remarkable for its absence. Miklaus draws our attention to this: "On n'aura pas de lune cette nuit" (*Axël*, 77). Sara has not yet arrived on the scene.

The second alchemical operation is putrefaction. Piobb says that the word was invented in the fourth century by St. Augustine "pour rendre ce que nous appelons aujourd'hui 'désagrégation'."[50] Putrefaction is "destruction de la nature ancienne, cet abandon des manières de voir qu'on avait jusqu'ici."[51] In his Dictionary of Symbols, J.E. Cirlot describes putrefaction as "separation of the destroyed remains" of calcination.[52] It results from the "travail que l'on fait par soi-même: elle est une manifestation d'évolution, elle devient susceptible de produire des fruits nouveaux."[53]

At this alchemical stage, Sara and Axël are isolated: from each other, and from the rest of the world. They are both orphans who prefer to keep their own company. Even as a child, Sara had "une nature . . . solitaire" (Axël, 10). When she leaves the convent to go on her quest for the treasure that Kaspar calls the "Toison d'Or" (Axël, 114), she does so accompanied only by the Christmas rose she has miraculously found outside the convent. Axël, as "celui qui ne veut pas aimer" (Axël, 236) is the "révolté," the man removed from life and all its obligations, the exile who has chosen to live in isolation from the world that has cast a pall of dishonour upon his family name.

It is an interesting paradox that the death of the profane effected by calcination leads to a cyclic return--rebirth into the profane. The parallel of the action in Axël with the Christian liturgical cycle helps to establish this paradox within the context of the play. (Axël begins shortly before midnight on Christmas Eve, and ends at dawn on Easter morning.)[54] We must remember that the Christian doctrine of salvation involves the incarnation of the divinity who atones for the sins of mankind through subsequent suffering and sacrificial death: the nativity of the Christ-child was a birth into the profane which was followed in due course by the redemptive crucifixion on Good Friday and resurrection on Easter Sunday. If, as Drougard insists, Sara and Axël are to be the Messiahs of a new religion,[55] then they, too, must be born into the profane. Thus it is that, during the stage of putrefaction they both reject the Ways offered to them by their mentors and, abandoning their former life styles and "manières de voir," in what appears to be a retrogressive step turn instead towards the profane.[56]

At the end of Part I, Sara renounces the mystic Way of religion presented by the archdeacon and sets out on her search for the Auërsperg treasure. Despite the fact that the archdeacon insists on the metamorphic or transforming power of faith,[57] Sara must reject the Way of religion because, as it is presented in Axël, it is an incomplete Way, for it denies two concepts essential to alchemy: the value and inherent goodness of intellect, and the possibility of perfection through evolution. Throughout Part I, intellect is represented as dangerous, as the "don terrible" which "surtout en une femme . . . devient plus souvent une torche qu'un flambeau" (Axël, 29, 30). Despite the transforming power of faith, the perfection of becoming pure spirit is impossible for humankind, the archdeacon contends, because the soul is composed first and foremost of matter which must remain separate from the divine.[58] Thus it is that Sara must utter her shocking "Non" to the Way of religion when the archdeacon asks, "acceptes-tu la Lumière, l'Espérance et la Vie?" (Axël, 46).

Axël, too, rejects "la Lumière, l'Espérance et la Vie" when he renounces the Way of "le monde occulte" offered by Janus. This is a particularly troublesome renunciation because it appears to run counter to the general thrust of the play, and also because Janus does not seem to be especially perturbed by Axël's rebellion.[59] In spite of the fact that Janus represents the wholeness and perfection of the true Way to spiritual transformation, Axël must reject the occult World when he does because it is being imposed from without through the agency of Janus, when putrefaction is produced by the "travail que l'on fait par soi-même" and the Magnum Opus demands that the individual come to acceptance of the Way freely from within, through self-enlightenment or discovery of the truth that he or she has always contained. This is why Janus says "Je n'instruis pas: j'éveille. . . . Nul n'est initié que par lui-même" (Axël, 196).[60]

This concept of self-transmutation is also the basis for the alchemist's pun on elixir/helix:[61] according to the play on words, the elixir produces both a circular process and comrades. That is, the circular Great Work is effected by and results in masters who are colleagues or equals.[62] Students of alchemy are simultaneously the worker and the worked upon of the Magnum Opus. "Le grand oeuvre," Lévi writes, "c'est avant toute chose, la création de l'homme par lui-même, c'est-à-dire la conquête pleine et entière qu'il fait de ses facultés et de son avenir; c'est surtout l'émancipation parfaite de sa volonté."[63] Later he speaks of "le grand et suprême athanor de nature qui est le corps de l'homme."[64]

In Axël, the theme of freedom or liberation is closely linked with that of renunciation and with the operation of putrefaction. Janus points out to Axël the conjunction between liberty and renunciation:

> La Mort, c'est avoir choisi. C'est l'Impersonnel, c'est le Devenu.
>
> Silence.
>
> Quelque tendance confuse te presse-t-elle encore de ressaisir la vérité de ton origine? Epouse, en toi, la destruction de la Nature. Résiste à ses aimants mortels. Sois la privation! Renonce! Délivre-toi. Sois ta propre victime! Consacre-toi sur les brasiers d'amour de la Science-auguste pour y mourir, en ascète, de la mort des phénix. --Ainsi, réfléchissant l'essentielle valeur de tes jours sur la Loi, tous leurs moments, pénétrés de sa réfraction, participeront de sa pérennité. Ainsi, tu annuleras en toi, autour de toi, toute limite! Et, oublieux à jamais de ce qui fut l'illusion de toi-même, ayant conquis l'idée, --libre enfin, --de ton être, tu redeviendras, dans l'Intemporel, --esprit purifié, distincte essence en l'Esprit Absolu, --le consort même de ce que tu appelles Déité. (Axël, 199-200; emphasis mine)

Although the first sub-title of the convent section, "...Et forcez-les d'entrer!" clearly emphasizes Sara's lack of liberty (she had been kept in the isolation of the in-pace for three months to convince her of the merits of convent life), freedom is an important theme in the archdeacon's exhortation to Sara both before and after her resounding "Non." The archdeacon shares Janus's views on asceticism; divine liberation from the flesh is one of the key points of his sermon: "Purifie donc, à jamais, ton âme de cette taie d'orgueil qui, seule, la sépare de la vue de Dieu; cesse d'être humaine, sois divine" (Axël, 39). Later he insists on the emancipation that Christianity has brought to women:

> Qu'était-ce donc une femme, ici-bas, avant les Chrétiens? C'était l'esclave. Nous l'avons affranchie et délivrée... et tu prononcerais, devant nous, le mot de liberté, comme si nous n'étions pas la Liberté même! (Axël, 52)

Despite the exhortations of the archdeacon, Sara rejects the religious life in order to seek Axël's treasure. It is not material gain that prompts her decision, however, for she has a fortune of her own which she has just signed over to the convent. It is the necessity of free choice which incites Sara's rejection.

Axël, too, wishes freedom of choice:

> Si la splendeur du paternel trésor m'était dévoilée, je pourrais choisir en liberté: --mais quoi! je n'ai même pas le mérite du sacrifice: le Destin me force à vivre de rêves. (Axël, 200)

Chance virtue for Axël, like forced virtue for Sara, is no virtue.

Paradoxically, the theme of fate or destiny is closely associated with that of freedom in Axël. Lévi points out that the two forces "que les alchimistes appelaient le fixe et le volatil . . . sont, dans l'absolu, la nécessité et la liberté."[65] In speaking of the hidden treasure, Axël says that it is "à la merci de qui en sera le prédestiné, s'il est conduit vers elle par un décret de cette Nécessité qui veille aux fortunes des humains" (Axël, 163). Sara uses the image of chains to describe the entwined destinies of Axël and herself. When he attempts to strike her with a chain, she throws her arms around his neck and cries,

> Non. Voici des chaînes plus lourdes--et... tu es bien mon prisonnier, cette fois. Essaye donc de te délivrer! --Ah! tu vois? Tu ne peux plus: c'est impossible. . . .
>
> Sois indulgent pour toi-même, enfant! Est-ce donc pour moi que je veux vivre! Ne me tue pas. A quoi bon? je suis inoubliable. (Axël, 237)

As we have seen, Janus, the omniscient and omnipotent manipulator, has pre-ordained the meeting of Axël and Sara: everything that happens is part of Janus's master plan.[66] Axël and Sara carry the weight of the past around with them, since for centuries their families have been mysteriously linked and have awaited the fulfilment of their encounter. It is not only the necessity of free choice which leads Sara to reject the convent, but also the necessity of her destiny. We should remember that Sara's first name is Eve, a name that, as I have already noted, marks her as having been created by someone else: her destiny has at least in part been pre-shaped.

Bürgisser discusses the apparent contradiction in Axël between the dual themes of freedom and necessity and concludes that they operate in two different planes, the vertical and the horizontal:

> l'homme, chez Villiers, a une liberté illimitée en tant qu'il lui est permis d'accéder à l'absolu. Mais il n'est jamais absolu en tant qu'homme, ou bien il est absolu et alors, il a perdu ses signes d'humanité, ou bien il reste homme et l'absolu ne sera pour lui qu'une possibilité.[67]

Man's freedom exists on the vertical plane; on the horizontal, he is the slave of necessity. The truly free man is the one "qui se conforme à son destin, qui le devient et qui se met ainsi au-dessus du monde extérieur qui est toujours contingent."[68]

Separated as they are while undergoing the operation of putrefaction, Sara and Axël can only meet, of course, if one of them goes on a journey in search of the other. It is Sara, the volatile principle, who sets out to find her opposite. In the crypt she tells Axël of her journey, "alors que, vêtue en pèlerin, je marchais, les yeux fixés sur l'étoile qui brille sur tes forêts" (Axël, 250). Like the Magi of old, she has followed a star in search of a very special epiphany.

The quest motif is an important one in alchemy: it is tied closely with metempsychosis and the journey of the soul in search of purification and wholeness. There is even a special term for the alchemical quest: the peregrinatio.[69] It is significant that in Axël all the main characters wear travelling clothes: Sara (57), Axël (224), Kaspar (86), and Janus (185).

Piobb notes that in alchemy one particular type of quest symbolism recurs frequently: that of the hunt, an image very common in mythology. Since, he says, to hunt is essentially to pursue game,

> Par conséquent tout chasseur est à la recherche d'un quadrupède ou d'un volatile dont il a l'intention de se nourrir ensuite. De là le chasseur symbolise le chercheur d'une nourriture intellectuelle.[70]

The hunting theme is present in Axël. We find Axël dressed as a hunter returning from the chase and being asked by Kaspar if he is "le Chasseur Noir" (Axël, 114, 115). We also find hunting horns (for example, pages 78, 113), and numerous hounds (the ones Axël hunts with, the others he keeps as watchdogs, and the marble ones at the foot of the memorial statues in the crypt). Here in the hunt is an image of the restless search for the ideal and a concrete (or rather marble) representation of the quiet state of fulfilled desire (symbolized by the white mausoleum hounds, one of which Sara caresses distractedly while Axël prepares the death potion).

The planet of the second stage of the alchemical process (putrefaction) is Saturn, named after the god who, as Cronos, ate his own children. Saturn is thus an Uroboros symbolic of the all-consuming appetite of time. Cirlot notes that Cronos is sometimes

> depicted with four eyes, two in front and two behind; this is a representation of simultaneity and of the position of the Present between the Past and the Future, a symbolism comparable with the two faces of Janus.[71]

We should remmber that Janus plays an important role in the whole alchemical process in Axël, and especially in this second stage. Cirlot's description of the symbolism of Saturn is important:

> He is . . . symbolic of the insufficiency, in the mystic sense, of any order of existence within the plane of the temporal, or the necessity for the "reign of Cronos" to be succeeded by another cosmic mode of existence in which time has no place. Time brings restlessness--the sense of duration lasting from the moment of stimulus up to the instant of satisfaction. Hence, Saturn is symbolic of activity, of slow, implacable dynamism, of realization and communication.[72]

In Axël, we find the characteristics of Saturn that Cirlot enumerates in this passage represented by the motifs of the journey and of hunting.

Among the emblems for Saturn (the original of old Father Time) is the scythe. Although there is no scythe in Axël, other instruments and details of setting provide analogues. In order to make good her escape from the convent, from among the ex-votos hung in the chapel Sara seizes "une vieille hache double, une guisarme" (Axël, 56; emphasis mine).[73] On the walls of the Great Hall of Axël's castle are "armures sarrasines" and "oriflammes orientales" which are explicitly described as including "des cimeterres" and standards with "croissant dédorés" (Axël, 62, 64).

Saturn's scythe is an ambiguous symbol related by its function to active destruction, and thus to putrefaction, and by its crescent shape to the feminine and passive procreative principle. Thus to the alchemists, Saturn is an androgyne and, therefore, "Mercurius senex."[74] Cirlot points out that

> given the androgynous character of Mercury, Saturn takes on the same characteristic ambiguity of gender and sex, and is related to the earth, the sarcophagus and putrefaction, as well as to the colour black.[75]

In Axël, putrefaction, like calcination, is linked with black: Sara's journey begins and ends in the dark of night, the time of day when both the hero and heroine reject "la Lumière, l'Espérance et la Vie."

The third alchemical operation is solution. The word is derived from the Latin solutio, "a loosening." It is during solution that

> chez le sujet évoluant, "se décomposent," selon le latin, les éléments constitutifs de l'être, où, comme disent les Alchimistes philosophes, "l'esprit se sépare du corps," donc où l'âme, avec l'intelligence qui l'exprime, prend son essor en quittant les préoccupations gênantes qui créent les besoins corporels.[76]

This is the stage of transmutation that Janus urged on Axël:

> --Regarde plutôt les cieux! Où point de cieux, point d'ailes! --Transfigure-toi dans leur silencieuse lumière: songe à développer dans la méditation, à purifier, au feu des épreuves et des sacrifices, l'influx infini de ta volonté! à devenir un adepte dans la Science des forts! à n'être plus qu'une intelligence affranchie des voeux et des liens de l'instant, en vue de la Loi suréternelle. (Axël, 198)

The freeing of the soul for its flight requires the total purification and separation from bodily concerns that we connect with death. Thus the joint de Maupers/Auërsperg family arms are particularly appropriate:

> D'azur, --à Tête-de-Mort ailée, d'argent, sur un septénaire d'étoiles de même, en abyme; avec la devise courant sur les lettres du nom. (Axël, 19)

Both Axël and Sara are intimately associated with death. Axël, of course, was responsible for the death of Kaspar. In the crypt, Sara remarks, "Je suis la plus sombre des vierges. Je crois me souvenir d'avoir fait tomber des anges. Hélas! des fleurs et des enfants sont morts de mon ombre" (Axël, 237). There is also an interesting manuscript fragment of Axël in which Sara confesses that she and her travelling companion and accomplice, the Christmas rose, have killed "je ne sais quel jeune seigneur attardé auprès des bois, pour avoir ses vêtements et son cheval" (Axël, 280).

Mars is, as we might suspect, the planet linked in Axël with the operation of solution. The god after whom this planet is named is traditionally associated with the metal iron, and his emblems are weapons of all kinds, but especially swords. Note that Miklaus, Gotthold, and Hartwig, the old warriors, are all decorated with the iron cross, that near the end of the play they sing "Adieu l'orgueil noir du Passé de fer" (Axël, 257), that a variety of weapons hang on the walls of the Great Hall, and that swords, pistols, and daggers all play important roles in the drama.

Distillation is the fourth operation in alchemy. Its planet is Jupiter, named after the god of the sky, wielder of the thunderbolt. This is the stage of the "pluie bienfaisante," of the collection of the purified elements isolated by the first three operations.[77]

In Axël, distillation occurs when Sara enters the castle in the midst of the thunder storm. The fixed and volatile principles have been collected although they are still not united: Sara and Axël are in the same building but have not yet met. It is important to remember that, as Piobb notes, in the myth of Perseus, Zeus (the heavens) descends as a golden rain on Danae, the personification of earth. The product of their union is Perseus, whose name means Persian, that is magos, to the Greeks.[78] Janus, the magus of Axël,[79] the illuminated or transformed man, observes the collection of the separated elements he has plotted to bring together: "Le Voile et le Manteau, tous deux renonciateurs, se sont croisés: l'Oeuvre s'accomplit" (Axël, 216).

The first transmutation has taken place; the mark of success is the introduction of a new colour: white. The scene immediately following the collection of the separated elements takes place in the crypt and is dominated by the white marble tombs and sculptures of the Auërsperg ancestors (Axël, 219).

One of the most interesting facets of the theme of liberation discussed earlier is its paradoxical association with settings that evoke loss of freedom, rather than the opposite. Jacques Guicharnaud remarks that the in-pace, the convent, and the burial vault, all spaces of confinement (the last two even with barred windows) are presented as "privileged places where the most diverse forms of freedom, inner infinity, or at least an awareness of them are achieved."[80] Milieus of darkness, isolation, punishment, and death become locales of enlightenment and liberation. It is doubtlessly during her confinement in the in-pace and its extension, the convent chapel, that Sara decides to free herself once and for all from the stranglehold of the Abbess; and of course, it is in the underground vault that Sara and Axël perform what is perhaps the only true act of liberation in the entire play--they commit suicide.

In alchemical terms, these spaces of confinement are connected with the "vase clos" that is essential to distillation. Piobb points out that in distillation ("réflexions poussées à l'extrême sur les données enseignées"),

> les réflexions successives, qui "distillent" positivement la pensée, doivent se faire dans un cadre dûment délimité. Sans quoi, la rêverie l'emporterait et, plutôt que de suivre le droit chemin, on "déraillerait."
> Or, il importe de demeurer dans "la Voie."[81]

The alchemical Way leads next to the fifth operation, conjunction. This is the "réunion des natures répugnantes et contraires en unité parfaite,"[82] the joining of opposites represented archetypically by the hierosgamos or "chymical wedding" in which the male and female principles unite and become one.

Sara and Axël meet for the first time in the crypt and embark on the Way of "Le Monde Passionnel." The fixed and the volatile, the sacred brother and sister have been united, bound together by the magic of love.[83] The imagery of the scene in the crypt underscores the union: when Axël tries to rid himself of the "magie de [la] présence" of Sara by striking her with heavy iron chains, Sara avoids the attack and flings her arms around Axël's neck with the words "Non. Voici des chaînes plus lourdes--et... tu es bien mon prisonnier, cette fois" (Axël, 236-37).

Conjunction is the stage of changeable passion, whether spiritual or physical: it is not the final stage of pure, immutable union. Piobb describes this stage:

> Evolutivement, on assistera au rapprochement de ce qui, dans la nature de l'élève évolutif, prenait un caractère désagréablement opposé à l'instruction reçue et paraissait même contraire à la voie intellectuellement suivie.[84]

Thus it is that Axël and Sara appear to be regressing once again: in turning to passionate love they seem to be rejecting the ascetic advice of both the archdeacon and Janus.

But this stage is a necessary one in the alchemical process, for through conjunction, the union of the fixed and volatile, each will partake of the other's nature.[85] In particular, the volatile will be fixed, and "'fixer,' pour les Alchimistes c'est donner 'la couleur du rubis'--la couleur rouge-- . . . à la 'forme'."[86] The second transmutation is then achieved, for red is the colour of this operation: blood (both Sara's and Axël's) and Sara's Christmas rose play important roles in this part of the play.

The rose is a particularly interesting emblem. August Strindberg, himself an experimenter in alchemy, links the rose with the number five (conjunction is the fifth operation) and with the planet Venus (the planet of conjunction). In "Rosa Mystica" Strindberg writes:

> La reine des fleurs, la Sainte Rose, la sauvage à corolle simple est bâtie sur le nombre 5.
>
> Cinq est le nombre de la perfection; d'après la Kabbale, le nombre de la sensualité (les cinq sens).
>
> Les cinq pétales de la corolle sont attachés sur le calice en pente ascendante, formant une spirale. Donc la fleur monte en hélice comme le soleil et le système planétaire est supposé se mouvoir vers le centre inconnu (Swedenborg).
>
> Les cinq pétales triangulaires fixés au cercle du périanthe constituent un pentagone régulier, figure parfaite qui renferme de hauts mystères.
>
> Les lignes diagonales du pentagone tracent l'image du pentagramme ou du pentalfa (les cinq alfa) le signe sacré de l'exorciste, qui a doué la Rose de forces occultes, gardées dans les couronnes nuptiales et funèbres, portées par les filles d'honneur de l'épouse, déposées sur les tombeaux afin de repousser les puissances infernales. . . .
>
> Le pentagone a résolu le problème de la trisection de l'angle, puisque les lignes diagonales partagent les coins en trois parties égales, chacune de 36 degrés, le coin du pentagone en occupant 108. Or, voici le nombre 108 qui appartient à la planète Vénus, nombre emprunté au ciel, comme la Rose a été dédiée à Vénus, la déesse de l'amour et de la beauté.
>
> A Vénus donc la Rose avec la beauté, le parfum et l'épine. Le Rosier, svelte comme un jonc, aux verges souples, aux piquants comme les dents du brochet; tu ne romps pas la fleur sans avoir les mains ensanglantées; tu mets la hache à la racine, et le buisson repousse, reverdit, refleurit; il méprise le feu et revient de ses propres cendres; il se plaît aux bords poussiéreux du chemin, il aime le sol pierreux, pourvu que l'air et le soleil lui soient fournis, à cette fleur d'amour miraculeuse.

> . . . La rose, teintée du sang d'Adonis, désire le sang. Sensible et cruelle, elle fait tomber les pétales au plus léger attouchement. Elle ne peut pas souffrir, mais elle apporte secours aux souffrants. Regardez le buisson, en automne, privé de fleurs et de feuilles! Rouge comme le feu, il porte sur chaque brindille une amphore à cinq anses, rouge cornaline, ou mieux une urne lacrymatoire. C'est ce que l'on a nommé Signatura rerum, l'indication de la nature qu'il s'y cache des forces guérisseuses.[87]

Like so many of the symbols associated with alchemy, the rose is, then, a very complex image. On the one hand, it is linked with the world of the flesh, with sensuality, violence, and death. On the other, it is related paradoxically to the world of the spirit, transcendent love, beauty, and salvation.

Superimposed upon the cross--represented in Axël by Sara's cruciform dagger (Axël, 247-49)--it becomes the emblem of Rosicrucianism. In "Les Rose-Croix et l'Eglise Intérieure," M. Clavelle states that as symbol the rose "équivaut à la coupe (donc au vase, au Graal) et au coeur."[88] When combined with the cross it becomes the

> symbole du centre du monde, de la montagne sacrée dont parlent précisément certains textes rosicruciens . . . , de la source principielle [sic] d'où rayonnent les influences spirituelles vers les quatre points cardinaux . . . [et de] la quintessence des alchimistes, l'élément primordial dont procèdent les quatre autres.[89]

The rosy-cross also symbolizes mystic marriage: not only the perfect conjunction of the male and female principles personified by Axël and Sara, but also the miraculous union of the human and the divine epitomized by Janus. This latter union is achieved eventually at the end of the alchemical process by Sara and Axël in a transcendent love which finds its only consummation in death.[90]

Sara, who is so obsessed by her companion, "l'inconsolable rose" (Axël, 247), that she wears mourning for its death, is aware, whether consciously or unconsciously, of the complex nature of this flower. Mysteriously drawn to the rose at the moment of her escape from the convent, Sara sees it as a personal symbol and more--as the reification of her liberating word of renunciation and the miraculous blossoming of her soul.

> L'harmonie entre les choses et les êtres n'est-elle pas infinie?... Cette royale rose, symbole de mon destin, correspondance familiale et divine, ne devais-je point la rencontrer, dès mes premiers pas? Son clair miracle saluait mon premier matin de liberté! C'était comme un avertissement merveilleux, image peut-être fixée d'une seule parole où je m'étais incarnée l'heure précédente. Elle me fit tressaillir, cette fleur, qui me semblait éclose de mon âme! Sans doute elle reconnut mes lèvres, Axël, lorsqu'au dédain de tous les périls, je lui dis, en un long baiser, mes grands espoirs! --Muette, sous ma bouche maternelle, je sentis, en mon coeur, qu'elle me suppliait de la cueillir. Doucement, donc, j'arrachai toute sa tige, à travers les dures épines, sur l'arbuste mort d'où elle s'était élancée et qui la supportait. Puis, je réchauffai, sous mon haleine, le souffle de son parfum entre mes mains, --entre mes mains qui tenaient encore cette arme secrète, forgée en de vieux jours.
> Elle montre le poignard cruciforme, tombé à terre. (Axël, 248-49)[91]

Sara falls under the influence, the magic power of the rose and experiences a mystic vision:

> Ecoute! Des esprits, --que sais-je... des génies, étaient, certes, enfermés en sa beauté!... Aussitôt, des passages de l'Histoire humaine, jusque-là voilés à mon esprit, s'illuminèrent, en ma mémoire, de significations augustes et surnaturelles. Ainsi, je compris, sans pouvoir m'expliquer cette fleur, ainsi placée, par hasard, entre mes mains, sur la croix de mon poignard, formait un Signe qui avait dissipé, autrefois, comme du sable, les plus fiers et les plus solides empires. Ce Signe, je l'ai bien vu, tout à l'heure, étinceler sur chacun de ces tombeaux. . . . Je me souvenais, par exemple, que l'un des voyants de l'Humanité [Dante] s'en était tenu à la forme de cette fleur pour exprimer, en ses vers, les cercles sacrés et vermeils des paradis de la nouvelle Espérance! (Axël, 249)

The reference to Dante reminds us that, in addition to being used as a central symbol by the Rosicrucians, the rose is also employed by orthodox Christians as an important emblem: it is, among other things, one of Mary's flowers, and closely associated with Christ and his passion, being the flower traditionally said to have arisen from the divine blood shed on the cross. We should remember that Sara found her rose just after midnight on Christmas morning and carried it with her until her encounter with Axël just before dawn of Easter morning.

This is the spiritual aspect of the rose, but Sara is aware also of its association with the earthly, with sensuality and death. With a tinge of irony, she recalls the English War of the Roses:

> songeant aux hommes moqueurs, je ne pouvais, malgré le froid indicible, résister à sourire--en me rappelant que le plus grave, oh! le plus industrieux des peuples s'était entre-immolé lui-même, pendant un siècle, pour des roses. (Axël, 249-50)

Then, despite her avowed love for the rose, Sara denies it even temporary "rebirth," sacrificing it instead to her passion for Axël:

> Laisse, que j'en essuie tes douces paupières!... Vois!... Elle semble revivre! --Elle prend tes jeunes larmes pour la rosée! --Mais plutôt... Non, --non! je veux l'effeuiller cruellement sur toi, mon chevalier, en présage de tous les abandons que mon amour trouvera pour te ravir!
>
> Elle effeuille, en silence, la fleur sur le front et les cheveux d'Axël; puis, devenue étrange et grave, tout à coup.
>
> --Comme je suis heureuse de voir que tu t'intéresses ainsi, pour peu que je t'en parle, au fantôme d'une fleur effacée!... (Axël, 250-51)

This speech, followed by Axël's avowal of love, "Je t'aime," leads immediately into the sensual "Invitation aux voyages."

The sixth and, according to Lévi, only important operation of the alchemical process is sublimation.[92] This is that elevation of worldly concerns and physical love to the spiritual plane that in Part III Janus tells Axël he must achieve: "Spiritualise ton corps: sublime-toi" (Axël, 194).

Sublimation, "the mystic detachment from the world and the dedication to spiritual striving,"[93] is closely associated with suffering. In Axël, the two partners of the mystic marriage decide not to consummate either their physical love for each other, or their dream of romantic adventure in far places. For Sara, especially, sublimation is difficult because she is attracted to the life of the senses. We have the distinct feeling that it is herself she is talking about when she cries out against her lover's thoughts of death, "Axël, Axël, m'oublies-tu déjà, pour des pensées divines?... Viens, voici la terre! viens vivre!" (Axël, 260; emphasis mine). At more than one point Axël wavers and nearly gives in (see for example, page 268), but in the end he convinces Sara that "Notre résolution n'est-elle pas si sublime qu'il ne faut pas laisser à nos esprits le temps de s'en réveiller!" (Axël, 265; emphasis mine). Both Axël and Sara choose sublimation.

Axël concludes that

> Accepter, désormais, de vivre, ne serait plus qu'un sacrilège envers nous-mêmes. Vivre? les serviteurs feront cela pour nous. (Axël, 261)

After Sara's magnificent "Invitation aux voyages" (Axël, 251-56), what reality could live up to the beautiful mirages she has conjured up? "La Terre. . . . C'est elle . . . qui est devenue l'Illusion!" (Axël, 261). "J'ai trop pensé pour daigner agir!" Axël remarks (Axël, 262).

With sublimation, the alchemical process is all but complete. Mercury--the planet closest to the sun, which is emblematic of gold--

is the planet of this sixth alchemical operation. Villiers's description of the treasure as it bursts from its hiding place is remarkable for its imagery:

> une scintillante averse de pierreries, une bruissante pluie de diamants . . . un écroulement de gemmes de toutes couleurs, mouillées de lumières, . . . [ce] torrentiel ruissellement de lueurs semble inonder . . . Sara. . . . Et . . . de tonnantes et sonnantes cataractes d'or liquide se profluent aux pieds de la ténébreuse advenue. (Axël, 229-30; emphasis mine)

Mercury is, of course, the liquid metal.

In connection with sublimation, Jung's description of Mercurius is important: he is "metallic yet liquid, matter yet spirit, cold yet fiery, poison and yet healing draught--a symbol uniting all opposites."[94] When Sara and Axël drink the poison from the "calice sacré" (Axël, 268), they are taking a healing draught that will cure them of their mortal illness--the life of the world. The deadly potion is, paradoxically, their alchemical elixir of life. Mercury, messenger of the gods, patron of travellers and "sovereign psychopomp"[95] will guide the transformed Sara and Axël in their "sursaut sacré" to the "ciel de leurs êtres," to, as Axël says, "notre même Infini!" (Axël, 264, 270).

Mercurius, who "stands at the beginning and end of the work,"[96] was present at the first alchemical operation in his feminine aspect as Luna, the moon. At this initial stage, especially as represented in Part I of the play, settings and references suggest the primordial womb of the prima materia. The setting of Part IV establishes echoes that remind us of the cyclic nature of the alchemical process: Part IV takes place in the Auërsperg burial vault deep within the bowels of the earth--the chthonic womb.

In the seventh and final stage of the alchemical process the new, transmuted metal is delivered from the evolutionary womb through the operation of philosophical coagulation, the "réunion inséparable du fixe et du volatif [sic] en une masse si fixe qu'elle ne craint point les atteintes du feu le plus violent."[97] Axël, the fixed, and Sara, the volatile, are inseparably united in death: at the close of the play they lie "entrelacés, sur le sable de l'allée funéraire, échangeant sur leurs lèvres le souffle suprême" (Axël, 270; emphasis mine). This total and immutable union in death is the fulfilment of the promise offered in the operation of conjunction.[98] The last action of the play occurs when "Une pièce d'or tombe, roule et sonne comme l'heure contre un sépulcre" (Axël, 271). The final transmutation has taken place, the gold of a new revelation has been produced.

The long-lost treasure that Sara uncovers is an important symbol for the working of the alchemical process. Buried beneath the castle, the treasure has been there all along: alchemy merely actualizes the potential indwelling, releasing from the base metal that which has always been present. This is what Janus alludes to when he tells Axël "Je n'instruis pas: j'éveille. . . . Nul n'est initié que par lui-même" (Axël, 196).[99]

The treasure has another significance, also. It represents the union of opposites necessary for the effecting of transmutation. Sara discovers the treasure, but only through the secret Rosicrucian message encoded in the Book of Hours which had belonged to Axël's mother, and which was delivered to Sara's convent by Janus. The search for the treasure brings about the "chymical wedding" of sacred brother and sister in which two, who have proceeded from one, return at last to one: the Auërsperg and de Maupers families, united in the past by Janus, went their separate ways, and then returned to unity in the fatal marriage-in-death of Axël and Sara. In his Arcanum Philosophiae Hermeticae, Jean d'Espagnet notes that alchemical evolution is summed up in the command, repeated as often as to become a slogan--"solve et coagula": "The whole progress of the Philosopher's work is nothing but Solution and Congelation; the Solution of the body, and Congelation of the Spirit."[100] Piobb further explains the command: "réduis tout ce que tu sais, tout ce que tu ressens, de façon à le décomposer, à l'analyser, à le passer au crible de ta Raison, et rassemble cela ensuite pour en faire une masse résistante, que nul ne pourra entamer."[101]

The Sun is the planet of philosophical coagulation, for it is the planet of illumination and enlightenment. As Sara and Axël die, the dawn of Easter morning breaks, "le soleil jaunit les marbres, les statues; le grésillement de la lampe et du flambeau se résout en fumée dans le rais lumineux qui flue obliquement du soupirail" (Axël, 271).

Light and the Philosopher's Stone

The timing of the deaths of Axël and Sara is particularly important. Throughout the play, Villiers places considerable emphasis on light of all kinds, but especially on the transitional shadows and half light of twilight times, both dusk and dawn. Part I begins in the twilight of the chapel lit only by the sanctuary light. It is Christmas Eve--the day marking the dusk of the old order and the dawn of the new dispensation. Part II is set in the evening twilight of a Holy Saturday marked by storm and flickering lightening. The day itself is one of transition in the Christian liturgy--a day of expectant waiting between the death of the god and his coming resurrection. In the Catholic Church there is no mass on Holy Saturday, only a vigil service until midnight of Easter Sunday when the priest exchanges his purple vestments, symbolic of the Passion, for the white of triumphant joy.[102] In Part II of Axël we learn that Janus first arrived at the Auërsperg castle at dawn on the day Axël's father died (Axël, 75). It is in this part, also, that Kaspar comments,

> Je croyais exister à l'aurore du siècle XIX? Erreur!... En franchissant ce seuil, je me suis aperçu que je vivais sous l'empereur Henri, au temps des guerres d'investiture. (Axël, 89)

Part III, which opens under the rubric "Au seuil," like Part II takes place on Holy Saturday evening--in the twilight of torch light and lightening flash. Part IV, set in the half light of the Auërsperg vault, as we have just seen, ends with the dawn of Easter morning.

Twilight, of course, is a transitional stage between the "two lights" which are day and night. As the shadowy time simultaneously linking and separating full light and full dark, it shares characteristics of both and hence serves as an excellent emblem for change, ambivalence, and dichotomy. The point between two worlds, two times, two opposite concepts, it is marked by the pull of contraries. Twilight may, then, represent both hope and despair, both beginnings and endings. In Part IV of Axël, for instance, we hear the "Choeur des Vieux Serviteurs Militaires" lamenting the death of an age, while Sara rejoices in the birth of a new one. Both use the symbolism of twilight times:

LE CHOEUR, assourdi par le lointain.

> Adieu l'orgueil noir du Passé de fer:
> Avec nous s'éteint sa lueur profonde!
> Pareil au coucher d'un soleil d'hiver,
> Tu meurs, ancien monde.
>
> Soudainement, au dehors, le ciel se bleuit; un rayon de l'aube traverse les franges des draperies du soupirail. --Au rouvrir de ses yeux, Sara l'aperçoit et tressaille.
>
> SARA, s'écriant.
>
> --Le jour! l'aurore! Axël!... --Regarde! Quel avenir levant!
>
> Elle marche vers le soupirail, écarte la draperie: le bleuissement du matin apparaît dans l'obituaire. (Axël, 257)

A period of expectant anticipation, twilight time lends itself particularly to creativity.[103] Its shadows and half lights play on the imagination and give rise to phantoms, to transformations and metamorphoses. The twilight world is the seductively mysterious and changeful world of faerie, the world of Yeats's Celtic Twilight in which the old pagan life survives simultaneously with the new beliefs. A sleepy-time world, twilight is characterized more by somnambulism than by deep torpor. Even as a time of tranquil meditation, it draws the mind and soul on to another world. Twilight is the realm of vision where the tug may be either solar or lunar; towards the light of day, reason and "reality," or towards the light of night, madness and "fantasy"; towards the divine or the infernal; the olympian or the chthonian.

Many critics, like Emile Drougard, see Axël as a nihilistic tragedy of total pessimism because of the dark atmosphere of the play, and especially because of the double suicide at the end.[104] They have chosen to emphasize the dark and hopeless side of the twilight gloom. A.W. Raitt leans towards this interpretation when he concludes that "L'aube qui point symbolise la vie qu'Axël et Sara vont quitter, la nuit la nouvelle vie qu'ils vont trouver dans la mort."[105] I disagree with this reading of the final scene in Axël: it seems to me that the situation is completely the reverse. The dark night Axël and Sara have just spent has been their last night of the flesh, strongly marked by the sensual ecstasy of Sara's invitation to Axël to accompany her to the exotic ends of the earth. The dawn is that of Easter morning, the dawn of the resurrection into eternal life for Christians. For Axël and Sara, too, this dawn signifies the beginning of a new life--the transcendent life of the spirit. The Christian liturgical year, it must be remembered, serves as a frame for Axël. Opposed as it may be to suicide, Christianity is a religion of renunciation, founded on a sacrificial death, a ritual murder that can be read as an act of suicide. Indeed, one of the best known dicta of the Master is:

> He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that
> loseth his life for my sake shall find it.[106]

Yet Christianity is not characterized as a religion of total pessimism, of failed transcendence.

Part of the difficulty in interpreting the conclusion of Axël resides, as Drougard points out, in two sentences at the very end of the play:

> Une pièce d'or tombe, roule et sonne comme l'heure contre
> un sépulcre. --Et--troublant le silence du lieu terrible
> où deux êtres humains viennent ainsi de vouer eux-mêmes
> leurs âmes à l'exil du CIEL. (Axël, 271)

Drougard feels that these lines contradict the whole thrust of the drama (which he sees as an anti-Christian revelation of Rosicrucian idealism). His explanation is that Villiers as idealistic and hence inevitably pessimistic philosopher wrote Axël, whereas Villiers as slightly heterodox but still believing Roman Catholic condemned what he wrote "en trois lignes, brèves et froides comme un verdict."[107] Drougard's interpretation rests on reading these lines unambiguously. He suggests that Sara and Axël have failed in their attempted transcendence and have condemned themselves to exile from Heaven.

It is possible to reverse the meaning completely in either of two ways. The first is to see this as an ironic statement. This would be in keeping both with Villiers's other writings--which are conspicuously marked by irony--and with the cautious alchemist's traditional protective cloak of obscurantism and ambiguity.[108] It is not necessary, however, to rely on an ironic reading of these lines in order to conclude that Sara and Axël have achieved transcendence. Based on the apt analogy of a phrase like "se vouer au service de Dieu," Villiers's sentence may be interpreted to mean that Sara and Axël consecrated themselves to the exile of Heaven. This reading is supported by Sara's earlier statement to Axël that "je suis cet exil, aux inconnues étoiles, que tu cherchais!" (Axël, 238).

The ambiguity and difficulty is typical of Villiers's work in general and can perhaps never really be resolved. I, however, prefer the more positive interpretation. There are a variety of reasons for concluding Axël and Sara have been successful in their alchemical quest for transcendence. Most obvious is the fact that the twilight period in which the play ends is the dawn of Easter morning--a time of triumphant joy marking not only the resurrection of the divinity, but also the renewal of life on earth, coming as it does with the return of spring. Linked with the vernal equinox, Easter is a feast of light (one of the ceremonies of the Holy Saturday Easter vigil in the Roman Catholic Church is the kindling of the new fire and the lighting of the Paschal candle). Since light is the symbol and sign of both natural and divine life, natural and spiritual illumination and revelation, the presence of increasing sunlight at the end of Axël indicates a very positive conclusion to the play.

There are striking parallels between the symbolism and action of Axël and the beliefs and rituals of the Order of the Golden Dawn to which Yeats belonged for a time. Alchemy played an important role in the development of the Order. One similarity with Axël of particular interest to us here is the importance of the concept of light.

In his volume, The Golden Dawn, Israel Regardie states that if one single word and idea can be used to sum up the teaching of the Order, it is Light. Note the close correspondence with Axël in the following description:

> From the candidate's first reception in the Hall of the Neophytes when the Hierophant adjures him with these words: "Child of Earth, long hast thou dwelt in darkness. Quit the night and seek the day," to the transfiguration in the Vault ceremony, the whole system has as its objective the bringing down of the Light.[109]

Regardie continues to explain that since life is a "dark chaotic night" (compare Parts I to III of Axël),

> It is not until we have clearly realised that we are enmeshed in darkness, an interior darkness, that we can commence to seek for that alchemical solvent which shall disperse the night, and call a halt to the continual projection outwards of the blackness which blinds our souls.[110]

The awakening to the Light is an important stage in spiritual growth.

> Symptomatic of this stage of interior growth is the utter transformation that comes over what previously appeared to be "the chaos, the darkness and the Gates of the Land of Night." While man is assumed into godhead, and the divine spirit is brought down into manhood, a new heaven and a new earth make their appearance, and familiar objects take on a divine radiance as though illumined by an internal spiritual light. And this is what, in part at any rate, was meant by the old alchemists, for the finding of the Philosopher's Stone converts all base metals into the purest gold.[111]

Axël and Sara have found the Philosopher's Stone. This spiritual fact is symbolized by the necklaces of diamonds Sara puts on in preparation for death (Axël, 267, 270). Cirlot connects the diamond, symbol of light and brilliance, with two important etymological roots: "the Sanskrit dyu, meaning 'luminous being,' . . . and the Greek adamas, meaning 'unconquerable'."[112] In alchemy, the diamond is one of the representations of the lapis philosophorum, the mysterious Stone which is the greatest of all discoveries for in it resides the power of transformation: "the transformer is above the transformed," Jung proclaims, "and transformation is one of the magical properties of the marvellous stone."[113] He continues on to quote from a treatise ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus concerning the "philosophical" significance of the Stone:

> Understand, ye sons of the wise, what this exceeding precious stone proclaims... "And my light conquers every light, and my virtues are more excellent than all virtues. . . . I beget the light, but the darkness too is of my nature. . . ."[114]

This quotation from Hermes suggests a close link between the Stone and the godhead. Jung devotes a long chapter of his work to "The Lapis-Christ Parallel."[115] One of his conclusions is that

> the ultimate aim of alchemy . . . was trying to produce a corpus subtile, a transfigured and resurrected body, i.e., a body that was at the same time spirit. In this it finds common ground with Chinese alchemy, as we have learned from The Secret of the Golden Flower. There the main concern is the "diamond body," in other words, the attainment of immortality through the transformation of the body. The diamond is an excellent symbol because it is hard, fiery, and translucent. Orthelius tells us that the philosophers have never found a better medicament than that which they called the noble and blessed stone of the philosophers, on account of its hardness, transparency, and rubeous hue.[116]

In trading her opaque opal necklace of Part I for the translucent diamonds of Part IV, Sara is exchanging earthly and mortal life for the transformation and transfiguration of heavenly and immortal existence. Villiers reminds us of the diamonds just before the final speech of the play:

> SARA
>
> Toute étincelante de diamants, inclinant la tête sur l'épaule d'Axël et comme perdue en un ravissement mystérieux.
>
> Maintenant, puisque l'infini seul n'est pas un mensonge, enlevons-nous, oublieux des autres parcles humaines, en notre même Infini! (Axël, 270)

The prophecies contained in the Auërsperg and de Maupers family mottos have been fulfilled: "Macte Animo! Ultima PERfulget Sola" and "AltiUs rEsurgeRe SPERo Gemmatus."[117] The diamonds suggest that Sara and Axël are moving towards "the irradiant, mystic 'Centre'."[118] The confidence and ecstasy of Sara's final speech welcoming death remind us of Janus's words: "Les Mages réels, s'ils dédaignent de vivre, --se dispensent aussi de mourir" (Axël, 197).[119] Lévi states that

> La dernière victoire que l'homme puisse remporter sur la mort, c'est de triompher du goût de la vie, non par désespoir, mais par une plus haute espérance, qui est renfermée dans la foi, pour tout ce qui est beau et honnête, du consentement de tout le monde.[120]

One further detail should be mentioned before I leave the topic of the play's conclusion. There are two manuscript fragments of Axël in which Janus has the last word in the play. Appearing in the crypt after the double suicide, he comments, "Oh! les délivrés!"[121] From this we would have to conclude not only, as Méautis does, that the death of Sara and Axël is an initiation ceremony, but also that it is the final step in a successful alchemical transformation. Méautis also refers to the theory that Villiers had originally intended there should be a fifth part to the play, entitled "Le Monde astral."[122] He suggests:

> Osons une hypothèse hardie inspirée par le bouddhisme et la Caverne de Platon: Axel et Sara acceptaient de revenir parmi les hommes par pur amour de l'Humanité.[123]

This is obviously a case of pure speculation, but an interesting one which leads to the conjecture that a fifth part might have summarized and made explicit the true and full Way which is veiled in Axël and stands in opposition to the four false or incomplete Ways presented by the play as we have it.

Art as Alchemy

Jung points out that alchemists style their work "an 'art' feeling--and rightly so--that it [is] concerned with creative processes that can be truly grasped only by experience, though intellect may give them a name."[124] Speaking of the seventeenth-century German physician and alchemist Michael Maier, who travelled extensively in search of alchemical knowledge and published many books on the subject, Jung writes that "at the end of his chef-d'oeuvre he confesses that in the course of his grand peregrinatio he found neither Mercurius nor the phoenix [symbol of regeneration and completion of the alchemical process], but only a feather--his pen!"[125] It is only a short step from treating the alchemist as artist to viewing the artist as alchemist. Whether consciously and explicitly or unconsciously and implicitly, Villiers (and Yeats), like many of the other symbolists, did just this.

Villiers's description of genius, of the artist, and his task, clearly recalls the role of the alchemist:

> Le génie n'a point pour mission de créer, mais d'éclairer ce qui, sans lui, serait condamné aux ténèbres. C'est l'ordonnateur du Chaos; il appelle, sépare et dispose les éléments aveugles; et quand nous sommes enlevés par l'admiration devant une oeuvre sublime, ce n'est pas qu'elle crée une idée en nous; c'est que, sous l'influence divine du génie, cette idée, qui était en nous, obscure à elle-même, s'est réveillée comme la fille de Jaïre, au toucher de celui qui vient d'en haut.[126]

Like alchemy, Villiers's theory of art is based on monism.[127] "Tout est identique à tout," Villiers writes.[128]

"Le Beau," according to Villiers, "c'est l'Art lui-même: la Vérité, sa sanction, le but" and "Le Beau est, de sa nature, un et infini. Ses manifestations sont aussi multiples que les étoiles du ciel." As a consequence, "Tout sujet lui est bon: tout moyen lui est possible: toute mèche peut brûler en ce flambeau, pour produire la lumière."[129] From a monist base, then, comes a theory of art that at first glance seems to suggest that art is amoral. We shall see shortly, however, that this is not really the case.

Raitt points out that Villiers has been strongly influenced in his attitude to the subject matter of art by Baudelaire and, through him, by Poe.[130] The introductory paragraph of "A propos d'un livre" is a clear statement "que l'art est indépendant de toute considération morale, étant axé uniquement sur la création de la beauté":[131]

> Selon quelques esprits diserts, le sujet d'une oeuvre d'art ne doit influer ni sur le verdict touchant la valeur esthétique de l'oeuvre, ni sur l'opinion morale que l'on peut désirer se faire touchant la personnalité de l'auteur. L'idée qui fait corps avec le travail et la poésie de cette oeuvre peut être, au point de vue de l'art, indifféremment choisie dans les catégories du juste ou de l'injuste, du bien ou du mal, du moral ou de l'immoral; ce n'est jamais, pour l'art, qu'une occasion, qu'un moyen, dans le sens abstrait du mot, de se manifester.[132]

Because art, like alchemy, uncovers the beauty, the gold that is inherent in everything, it does not matter what topic the artist chooses:

> Le moyen, le sujet, le drame est chose si indifférente en soi pour le génie, que le génie ne se donne presque jamais la peine de l'inventer. Il se superpose, voilà tout. Il fait ébaucher le marbre par l'élève, et prend son bien où bon lui semble, sans que personne ait à l'accuser de plagiat. Hamlet n'est pas plus de Shakspeare que Faust n'est de Goethe, ni don Juan de Molière. Aucun des principaux drames de Shakspeare n'est de lui, en tant que drame, comme nous le savons, maintenant. Il allait jusqu'à se conformer aux moindres détails d'une chronique, ou de l'oeuvre dramatique précédente; il prenait les phrases mêmes, les épisodes, l'action absolue, jetait dans tout cela quelques paroles, dédaigneusement, et cela suffisait pour que l'oeuvre devînt telle que, tout en restant presque identique, en apparence, à l'oeuvre étrangère et primitive, elle était transformée, en réalité, jusqu'à ne plus présenter de rapport appréciable avec l'antécédente. Le vagissement devenait un éclat de tonnerre.[133]

The artist is an alchemist, a magus, a magician who brings order to and transforms the prima materia on which he works: "l'Artiste-véritable, [est] celui qui crée, unit et transfigure."[134] He purifies and redeems the most degenerate or profane of materials with the result that

> l'impur n'est plus ce qu'il nous apparaît, dans sa réalité: on ne doit plus le voir! Le génie est devenu sa rédemption: il s'est transfiguré sous le sceptre de diamant du magicien sacré: sujet de l'intelligence idéale, il ne relève plus de la conscience hypocrite, changeante et diverse, des hommes.[135]

The alchemical process worked by the artist effects the purification and sublimation of the material, transmuting it from the dark world of change to the "royaume où toute chose est appelée à la transfiguration" and fixed unchanging for eternity "tout irradiée."[136]

Villiers is opposed to the notion of inspiration in the popular sense in which

> L'artiste devient . . . une sorte de sibylle sur le trépied, quasi inconsciente de la signification de ses chants, ou, pour mieux dire, une machine de Vaucanson.[137]

In contrast to this use of the word "qui sent son bourgeois moderne de plusieurs milles," Villiers offers his own definition of inspiration:

> L'inspiration n'est autre chose que le libre développement d'une aptitude innée vers le beau idéal; c'est une bosse qui grossit; pour être sur une montagne, il faut être parti de terre et avoir monté péniblement la montagne; de même, pour être élevé réellement, il faut avoir gravi un à un les degrés dont cette élévation n'est que la somme.[138]

The alchemist, whether scientist or artist, works hard to obtain his transmutation and must take his material through each of the successive stages of the alchemical process if he wishes to accomplish his work. "Dr. Papus" [G. Encausse] explains:

> Ainsi, Chimie, Alchimie, Philosophie hermétique forment les trois échelons qui du laboratoire élevaient l'initié jusqu'à l'oratoire en passant par la réalisation artistique. De là l'axiome: Labora, Opera, Ora . . . et invenies.[139]

Genius, Villiers says, does not come from passive acceptance of received wisdom or teachings:

> Le Génie, c'est l'application passionnelle, la résultante d'une organisation saine et laborieuse, la pleine possession de soi-même.[140]

We have heard these words already in Axël where the archdeacon tells Sara that "l'éternité . . . n'est que la pleine possession de soi-même en un seul et même instant" (Axël, 36).

The artist may be compared with Axël, who must apply himself to his own transformation, because he is simultaneously the alchemist and the prima materia: the alchemical gold, "cet or mystérieux" (Axël, 259), is buried within himself simply waiting to be liberated, just as all along the treasure has been in the burial vault waiting for the right person to discover it.

How shall we recognize true beauty, Villiers asks, in "Peintures décoratives du foyer de l'Opéra?" The reply is, "Si vous ne l'avez pas en vous-même, vous ne le reconnaîtrez nulle part."[141] Beauty is independant of external contingencies because, like the alchemical gold, "il est avant tout dans l'âme de l'artiste."[142] In his sermon to Sara, the archdeacon uses a very interesting image that should be recalled in this context:

> Par elle [la Foi], tu renaîtras, transfigurée en ton propre cantique, l'âme étant une harmonie, comme le dit, avec inspiration, sainte Hildegarde. --Pulcher hymnus Dei homo immortalis! a dit aussi Lactance. (Axël, 36-37)[143]

In his article on Richard Wagner, "Souvenir," Villiers attributes to the German composer a confession that the heart of Wagner's work is the Christian faith within his soul. Whether or not we trust the accuracy of Villiers's reporting on Wagner's beliefs, the article is important for Villiers's own aesthetics. "Mon art, c'est ma prière," says the Wagner of "Souvenir."[144] Only an artist blessed with true faith, he continues, can produce a work of art, for

> Une foi brûlante, sacrée, précise, inaltérable, est le signe premier qui marque le réel artiste: --car, en toute production d'Art digne d'un homme, la valeur artistique et la valeur vivante se confondent: c'est la dualité mêlée du corps et de l'âme. L'oeuvre d'un individu sans foi ne sera jamais l'oeuvre d'un ARTISTE, puisqu'elle manquera toujours de cette flamme vive qui enthousiasme, élève, grandit, réchauffe et fortifie; cela sentira toujours le cadavre, que galvanise un métier frivole.[145]

By faith, of course, Villiers does not necessarily mean only Christian faith, or even religious faith; there is also artistic faith, an active and creative belief in the imagination.[146] Villiers writes that in poetry, as in religion, "il faut la foi, et la foi n'a pas besoin de voir avec les yeux du corps pour contempler ce qu'elle reconnaît bien mieux en elle-même."[147]

But faith alone is insufficient to art, for without the application of the tools of the artist's trade--his craft--"la Foi, seule, ne peut produire et proférer que des cris sublimes qui, faute de se concevoir eux-mêmes, ne sembleront au vulgaire, hélas, que d'incohérentes clameurs."[148] The true artist, then, must possess "ces deux indissolubles dons: la Science ET la Foi."[149] Once again the image of the alchemist comes to mind, for implicit within the very word laboratory is the word and concept of oratory:

> Jadis, la Science était vivante, c'est-à-dire qu'elle était organisée dans la moindre de ses sections en corps, âme et esprit, et qu'à côté de la partie physique, du cadavre, il y avait toujours une partie métaphysique. L'étude des sciences était donc autant une question

> religieuse qu'une question intellectuelle, et les travaux d'oratoire appuyaient et illuminaient les travaux de laboratoire.[150]

In both theme and structure, Axël is an expression of the dictum that the true artist must possess both "Science" and "Foi": Part I, the archdeacon and Sara represent "Foi" ("le Voile"); Part III, Janus and Axël represent "Science" ("le Manteau"). Separately they are inadequate to the task of producing a unified, transformed work of art that gives "cette magique impression où la nature apparaît comme transfigurée par l'atmosphère idéale que l'Art seul peut répandre sur les choses."[151] Only fragmented "mosaïques" and incoherent cries can result.[152] But when Faith and Science unite, as Janus points out, "Le Voile et le Manteau, tous deux renonciateurs, se sont croisés; l'Oeuvre s'accomplit" (Axël, 216). The total work of art, the Gesamtkunstwerk that was the obsession of the symbolists, is achieved. I shall return to this concept of "l'Oeuvre" a little later.

In art, as in alchemy, a base in monism leads to the doctrine of correspondences. If, as Hermes says in the Emerald Table, "Toutes Choses se sont faites d'un Seul," then, "Il est Vrai, Il est Certain, Il est Réel: Que Ce qui est en Bas est Comme Ce qui est en Haut. Et Ce qui est en Haut Comme ce qui est en Bas: Pour l'Accomplissement des Merveilles de la Chose Unique."[153] The result in symbolist art, as René Wellek points out, is "a web of correspondences, a rhetoric of metamorphoses in which everything reflects everything else."[154]

The main source of the theory of correspondences for the symbolists was Baudelaire's interpretation of Swedenborg in, for example, his much quoted sonnet "Correspondances," and the discussion of the theory in the introduction to his translation of Poe's Nouvelles Histoires extraordinaires.[155] O. Johannesson discusses the "aesthetic implications" of Swedenborg's theory of correspondences:

> In essence, Swedenborg confers a new and elevated role on the poet by raising the function of the metaphor to the expression of the orderly universe, hidden to the scientist but revealed to the poet whose task is to work with likenesses. The poet then has access to a form of knowledge denied others. And his work with likenesses is an act of religious worship, for seeing that the likenesses between things point to their common origin, thus revealing the wisdom and greatness of the creator as the source of the unity of things, to discover and to interpret analogies is a way of honoring God. By revealing that the reality of this world is only a sign language the poet intimates the existence of a higher reality, more beautiful and more perfect.[156]

A.W. Raitt points out that the sense in which Villiers uses the word "correspondance" varies from place to place.[157] Sometimes it means "universal analogy" as it does in the passages from L'Ève future and "Peintures décoratives de l'Opéra":

> Tous les êtres ont leurs correspondances dans un règne inférieur de la nature. Cette correspondance, qui est, en quelque sorte, la figure de leur réalité, les éclaire aux yeux du métaphysicien. (L'Ève, 226)

* * * * * * *

> Les différents degrés d'intensité de cette lumière [le Beau, un et infini], qui a sa correspondance en chaque homme digne de ce nom, ne proviennent dans les oeuvres d'art où ils apparaissent, que des différents degrés de puissance conceptive et expressive dont sont doués les âmes des artistes: voilà tout.[158]

Sometimes "correspondance" is a sort of synonym for premonition or "avertissement," "une espèce d'intersigne, un message symbolique de l'au-delà, momentané et fugitif"[159] as it is in "L'Avertissement" and in "Le Tzar et les Grands-ducs."[160]

From the perspective of this dissertation, the two most important passages in Villiers's work related to correspondence are one in Axël and one in L'Eve future. Although I quoted part of the passage from Axël earlier in this chapter, it is important enough to repeat. Sara is describing how she came across her rose:

> Soudain, aux clartés des dernières étoiles, le prodige de cette fleur, victorieuse de l'Hiver à mon exemple, attira mes regards, et sa vision me sembla dégagée de moi-même! L'harmonie entre les choses et les êtres n'est-elle pas infinie?... Cette royale rose, symbole de mon destin, correspondance familiale et divine, ne devais-je point la rencontrer, dès mes premiers pas? Son clair miracle saluait mon premier matin de liberté! C'était comme un avertissement merveilleux, image peut-être fixée d'une seule parole où je m'étais incarnée l'heure précédente. Elle me fit tressaillir, cette fleur, qui me semblait éclose de mon âme! (Axël, 248; emphasis Villiers's)

The rose is a correspondence, an image and a vision which is released from within Sara. It not only evokes the vision of the past, both historical and literary, that I have already mentioned (Axël, 249), but also inspires the glorious vision of the future expressed in Sara's "Invitation aux voyages" (Axël, 251-56).[161] In short, the rose is a living poetic symbol which, backed by and building on tradition, expands the horizons of the imagination and creates a new world. Sara's rose adds to and transforms the tradition in the manner discussed by T.S. Eliot in "Tradition and the Individual Talent."[162]

The passage from L'Eve future focusses on the connection between correspondences and the imagination. It comes from the chapter "Figures dans la nuit." Although Villiers does not use the word "correspondance" in this case, it is clear, as A.W. Raitt points out, that Villiers is giving an explication of the theory.[163] Hadaly is speaking to Lord

Ewald about the shadows, forms, and faces that sometimes appear in the twilight and half-sleep that follow disturbing dreams:

> nulle raison . . . ne saurait . . . imaginer l'idée [de l'infini] autrement que par un pressentiment, un vertige, --ou dans un désir.
>
> Eh bien! en ces instants où, voilé par une demi-veille et sur le point d'être ressaisi par les pesanteurs de la Raison et des Sens, l'esprit est encore tout imbu du fluide mixte de ces rares et visionnaires sommeils dont je te parle, --tout homme en qui fermente, *dès ici*, le germe d'une ultérieure élection et qui sent bien, déjà, ses actes et ses arrière-pensées tramer la chair et la forme futures de sa renaissance, ou, si tu préfères, de sa continuité, cet homme a conscience, en cet autour de lui, tout d'abord de la réalité d'un autre espace inexprimable et dont l'espace apparent, où nous sommes enfermés, *n'est que la figure*.
>
> . . . Une affinité s'établit donc, alors, entre son âme et les êtres, encore *futurs* pour lui, de ces occultes univers contigus à celui des sens; et le chemin de relation où le courant se réalise entre ce double monde n'est autre que ce domaine de l'Esprit, que la Raison, --exultant et riant de ses lourdes chaînes pour une heure triomphales, --appelle, avec un dédain vide, L'IMAGINAIRE.
>
> C'est pourquoi l'impression que ton esprit, errant encore sur la frontière de ce sommeil étrange et de la vie, avait subie tout d'abord et en sursaut, c'est pourquoi cette primitive et intuitive impression ne t'avait pas trompé. *Ils étaient bien là, dans la chambre, autour de toi, ceux-là qu'on ne peut nommer*, --ces précurseurs, si inquiétants, qui n'apparaissent, le jour, que dans l'éclair d'un pressentiment, d'une coïncidence ou d'un symbole. (*L'Eve*, 376-77)[164]

The only way to capture the ineffable space of the infinite, of the imaginary that the human spirit senses while in the twilight zone between sleeping and waking, is through the suggestive power of the symbol. Jung points out the importance of imagination to the alchemists who stressed the role of *meditatio* and *imaginatio* in their work. He quotes the *Rosarium philosophorum*:

> Nature performeth her operations gradually; and indeed I would have thee do the same: let thy imagination be guided wholly by nature. And observe according to nature, through whom the substances regenerate themselves in the bowels of the earth. And imagine this with true and not with fantastic imagination.[165]

Later Jung explains:

> The _imaginatio_, as the alchemists understand it, is in truth a key that opens the door to the secret of the _opus_. . . . We now know that it was a question of representing and realizing those "greater" things which the soul, on God's behalf, imagines creatively and _extra naturam_--or, to put it in modern language, a question of actualizing those contents of the unconscious which are outside nature, i.e., not a datum of our empirical world, and therefore an _a priori_ of archetypal character. The place or the medium of realization is neither mind nor matter, but that intermediate realm of subtle reality which can be adequately only expressed by the symbol. The symbol is neither abstract nor concrete, neither rational nor irrational, neither real nor unreal. It is always both: it is _non vulgi_, the aristocratic preoccupation of one who is set apart (_cuiuslibet sequestrati_), chosen and predestined by God from the very beginning.[166]

The parallels with _Axël_ are striking. Notice especially that the symbol is "the aristocratic preoccupation of one who is set apart . . . chosen and predestined by God from the very beginning." We have already seen that Axël and Sara--images of the artist--are exceptional individuals set apart from the crowd and predestined to a very special purpose. When Kaspar, representative of the "terre-à-terre" bourgeois positivists so hated by Villiers, threatens to break the peace and isolation of Axël's forest exile by bringing in troops to search for the lost treasure, Axël, "calme et hautain," scornfully replies,

> Pourquoi permettrais-je, pouvant m'y opposer, qu'un ou deux milliers de brutes humaines, à votre solde, apparus soudainement ici, profanent, longtemps et de vive force, du gros rire de leurs présences, le seul lieu d'exil où je doive ensevelir la dignité de ma vie? Je

> sais qu'il peut sembler tout simple, à des gens de loi, qu'au nom de cet "intérêt général" dont le vil mensonge vient d'apparaître, --sous prétexte, enfin, de reconquérir de l'or peut-être imaginaire, --il soit licite à des colonnes de déterreurs de venir défigurer cette terre, prix du sang glorieux de toute une race que je résume, --et saccager ce sol que les miens foulèrent filialement depuis des siècles: qu'importeraient ces allégations sentimentales! On me dédommagerait, n'est-ce pas, une fois abattus et déracinés, de ces milliers de vieux arbres qui sont pour moi d'anciens amis? --Non. (Axël, 159)

The buried gold is an image of the truth hidden in art, and Axël's forest a representation of the artist's words which take their strength from a particular "sol" or milieu and are not to be defiled by "un ou deux milliers de brutes humaines" but reserved for the select few worthy of the honour.[167] These may be other artists, or they may be the good and simple folk who by nature are close to the meaning of life and hence to the roots of poetry because they are, as Yeats notes, learned in "the unwritten tradition which binds the unlettered, so long as they are masters of themselves to the beginning of time and to the foundation of the world."[168]

In Axël, the simple people are represented by the peasants living in the forest and by the servants and retainers in the castle. It is these folk who instinctively grasp the complexities of existence and express them in song. The choruses of the "Vieux Serviteurs Militaires" (Axël, 257, 258) and of the "Bûcherons" (Axël, 269), together with Ukko's betrothal song (Axël, 269) form a mini poetic sequence, a micro-correspondence reflecting the macrocosm of the play with its cyclic structure and theme: the songs depict the end of an era, the natural basis of new life in the destruction of old, the hymn of nature, and the joy in beginnings. Although Axël has no interest in the middle-class masses, in the "'bien-être' d'un million d'indifférents" (Axël, 160), he is very close to his "serviteurs." He takes a paternalistic feudal interest in them and bequeaths to them, not only his material possessions, his castle, but also the whole of life, for the servants are to be the masters' lieutenants in life as in art (see Axël, 224-25, 261).

The attitude towards art expressed in Axël--in favour of an elitist art scornful of the bourgeoisie but with strong associations with the folk--is found also in the work of W.B. Yeats. Yeats rejects "the triviality of emotion, the poverty of ideas, the imperfect sense of beauty" which marks the "public" poetry that appeals to the middle classes.[169] He is no more willing than Villiers to cater to the lazy populace, to water down his poetry and make it easy to read with clear logic and lucid exposition:

> There is only one kind of good poetry, for the poetry of the coteries, which presupposes the written tradition, does not differ in kind from the true poetry of the people, which presupposes the unwritten tradition. Both are alike strange and obscure, and unreal to all who have not understanding, and both, instead of that manifest logic, that clear rhetoric of the "popular [middle-class] poetry," glimmer with thoughts and images whose "ancestors were stout and wise," "anigh to Paradise" "ere yet men knew the gift of corn."[170]

It is clear from this passage that Yeats sees a close link between poet and peasant. He differs in this respect from Villiers only in the matter of emphasis: although Villiers insists on an elitist art in much of his work and is forever railing against the bourgeoisie, he insists less than Yeats does on the connection between artist/aristocrat and peasant.

For Yeats and Villiers, as for the other symbolists, true art, like alchemy, was the domain of an elite, the initiated who, in Villiers's words, share "le dédain profond du Génie, qui connaissant la foule, agit et parle sans entraves, s'adresse à ceux-là seuls qu'il aime, sans être aperçu ni entendu des autres spectateurs."[171] The artist, like the alchemist, speaks a hidden language, the language of symbols, that will be understood only be colleagues in the art.

The great faith placed by Villiers in the suggestive power of the symbol is only exceeded by his belief in the power of the word. In his 1890 lecture on Villiers, Mallarmé states that Villiers's "adoration pour la vertu des mots" was so strong as to be considered a "culte du vocable."[172] Rémy de Gourmont writes that Villiers

> croyait davantage aux mots qu'aux réalités, qui ne sont, d'ailleurs, que l'ombre tangible des mots, car il est bien évident, et par un très simple syllogisme, que, s'il n'y a pas de pensée en absence de verbe, il n'y a pas, non plus, de matière en absence de pensée. La puissance des mots, il l'admettait jusqu'à la superstition.[173]

Villiers believed in the active, creative power of the word, in "la vitalité du verbe" (Axël, 202) and what Victor-Emile Michelet calls its "sens vivant."[174] "Tout verbe, dans le cercle de son action, crée ce qu'il exprime. Mesure donc ce que tu accordes de volonté aux fictions de ton esprit," the Traité de causes secondes admonishes in Axël (88). In her description of the rose as the "image peut-être fixée d'une seule parole où je m'étais incarnée" (Axël, 248), Sara suggests that the word is both the signifier and the signified for the symbol.[175] We have seen that Sara's rose/symbol calls up visions of the past and future for her; these visions she recreates for us through the magic of her words, just as in "Les Filles de Milton" "la voix de Milton, lente et sublime," creates the grand vision of a "texte inconnu des générations":

> C'était une éruption d'images où des pensées se symbolisaient en grands éclairs, --et la voix oublieuse de l'heure de la nuit sonnait, vibrante, profonde, mélodieuse! Un ange passa dans l'inspiration, car il semblait que l'on distinguât des frémissements d'ailes dans les mots sacrés qu'il proférait. Et les cimes des arbres de l'Eden s'illuminaient d'aurores perdues et le chant matinal d'Eve, priant auprès des premières fontaines, devant l'Adam candide et grave, qui adorait, en silence, --et les reflets bleus du dragon s'enroulant autour de l'arbre défendu, et l'impression de la première tentatrice de notre race, --oh! cela chantait dans la transfiguration du vieux voyant...[176]

In these passages from Axël and "Les Filles de Milton" Villiers presents an image of what Drougard describes as his faith "dans la magie du Verbe, dans la puissance créatrice des mots subtilement choisis, savamment assemblés et modulés en manière d'incantation par quelque voix souveraine."[177] This magic is what Villiers aims at in his own writing. He believes that the word has power to enchant and control, as both Axël and Sara discover: "Pendant que tu parlais, le reflet de ton être m'entrait dans l'âme; tu t'emparais des battements de mon coeur... et j'ai, déjà, ton ombre sur toutes les pensées," Axël laments, and Sara replies shortly after, "Tu aurais dû frapper sans me laisser entrevoir ton âme aux flamboiements de ces mots surhumains!" (Axël, 235, 236).

The power of the word is sacred, a correspondence or reflection of the creative power of the divinity itself, for Jesus, Villiers notes in a manuscript fragment of Axël, is "l'éternel mage" and "Dieu le Verbe même" (Axël, 282). Lévi writes at length about the power and importance of the word, beginning once again from the principle of monism:

Le verbe humain, le créateur des merveilles de l'homme, s'unit pour jamais avec le verbe de Dieu, et fait cesser l'antinomie universelle en nous faisant comprendre que l'harmonie résulte de l'analogie des contraires.

. . . .

La vérité, c'est la vie, et la vie se prouve par le mouvement. Par le mouvement aussi, par le mouvement voulu et effectif, par l'action, en un mot, la vie se développe et revêt des formes nouvelles. Or, les développements de la vie par elle-même, et son enfantement des formes nouvelles, nous l'appelons création. La puissance intelligente qui agit dans le mouvement universel, nous l'appelons le VERBE, d'une manière transcendentale et absolue. C'est l'initiative de Dieu, qui jamais ne peut rester sans effet ni s'arrêter sans avoir atteint son but. Pour Dieu, parler c'est faire; et telle devrait être toujours la portée de la parole, même chez les hommes: la vraie parole est la semence des actions. . . .

Jésus, dit l'Evangile, était puissant en oeuvres et en paroles; les oeuvres avant la parole: c'est ainsi que s'établit et se prouve le droit de parler. Jésus se mit à faire et à parler, dit ailleurs un évangéliste, et souvent, dans le langage primitif de l'Ecriture sainte, une action est appelée un verbe. Dans toutes les langues, d'ailleurs, on nomme VERBE ce qui exprime à la fois l'être et l'action, et il n'est pas de verbe qui ne puisse être suppléé par le verbe faire, en diversifiant le régime. Dans le principe était le Verbe, dit l'évangéliste saint Jean, Dans quel principe? Dans le premier principe; dans le principe absolu qui est avant toute chose. Dans ce principe donc était le Verbe, c'est-à-dire l'action. Cela est incontestable en philosophie, puisque le premier principe est nécessairement le premier moteur. Le Verbe n'est pas une abstraction: c'est le principe le plus positif qui soit au monde, puisqu'il se prouve sans cesse par des actes. La philosophie du Verbe est essentiellement la philosophie de l'action et des faits accomplis, et c'est en cela même qu'il faut distinguer un verbe d'une parole. La parole peut être quelquefois stérile, comme dans la moisson il se rencontre des épis vides, mais le Verbe ne l'est jamais. Le Verbe, c'est la parole pleine et féconde; les hommes ne s'amusent pas à l'écouter et à lui applaudir; ils l'accomplissent toujours! souvent sans le comprendre, presque jamais sans lui avoir résisté. Les doctrines qu'on répète ne sont pas celles qui réussissent. Le christianisme était encore un mystère, que déjà les Césars se sentaient détrônés par le Verbe chrétien. Un système que le monde admire et auquel la foule applaudit, peut n'être qu'un assemblage brillant de mots stériles; un système que l'humanité subit pour ainsi dire malgré elle, c'est UN VERBE.[178]

It is this hidden but vital power of the word that fascinates Villiers. He frequently characterizes the word as a veil, a veil which like the surface drama of *Axël* serves both to conceal and to reveal what is behind it. Axël criticizes Kaspar's attempt to deceive him about his interest in the treasure, but he seems less upset by the deception than by Kaspar's misuse of words, his verbal counterfeiting which, a little later, Axël labels, "Acte de faussaire ou de perroquet" (*Axël*, 160). Kaspar is a false alchemist of the word, "Mais," Axël points out,

> sous le voile de ce dont il parle, nul ne traduit, n'évoque et n'exprime jamais que lui-même.
>
> Or, conçues par toi, imbues de ton être, pénétrées de ta voix, par ton esprit reflétées, les choses de ces paroles, à leur ressortir de ta nature et de toi proférées, ne m'arrivaient, incarnées en l'intime de ta présence, que comme autant d'effigies de toi-même--frappées en des sons neutres d'une vibration toujours étrangère à leur sens, et le démentant.
>
> Car ces choses, fictivement incluses en des mots qui, par eux-mêmes, ne peuvent être, jamais, que virtuels, --ne me semblaient plus, songées par toi, que d'une *prétendue* identité avec celles, --du même nom, --dont la vivante illusion verbale m'eût peut-être charmé. Comment, en effet, les *reconnaître*! Sèches, répulsives, inquiétantes, glacées, --hostiles, dès lors, à ces noms mêmes qu'elles avaient l'air d'usurper sur ta langue pour m'abuser, --je ne ressentais d'elles, en tes dires dénués de leurs images *réelles*, qu'une odeur de coeur desséché, qu'une impression de cadavérique impudeur d'âme, que le sourd avertissement d'une constante arrière-pensée de perfidie. Et, ce triple élément, constituant, à mes yeux, l'air interne, exclusivement pour toi respirable, de ton hybride, ambiguë, éteinte et tortueuse entité, tes paroles ne résonnaient que... comme des vocables troubles, ne traduisant que l'atrophie, innée en toi, des choses mêmes dont ils prétendaient me suggérer le désir. En sorte que, sous les capiteux voiles de ta causerie ainsi brodée de ces beaux mots-spectres, sache que toi seul, --morne et chatoyant convive! --m'es apparu. (*Axël*, 145-46)

Kaspar's verbal counterfeiting is a form both of blasphemy and of murder, because, as Lévi notes, "la révélation, c'est le verbe. Le verbe, en effet, ou la parole, est le voile de l'être et le signe caractéristique de la vie."[179]

Lévi's distinction between "verbe" and "parole" is important, since as a sign or symbol of life, words ("paroles") have a significant value, but they remain, as Janus says, "le langage changeant de la poudre et de la vermine" (Axël, 206); the truly vital and creative power lies with the "verbe," with what the archdeacon terms the "sens substantiel que proféraient [les] paroles" (Axël, 30). The surface of the words is important only as a veil is important: to hide the secret beauty that is behind from the prying eyes of those who should be excluded (the uninitiated or the strangers to the harem) and simultaneously to provide an enticement, to intrigue those whom it would beckon to a full disclosure of the mystery it hides.[180]

The unworthy, the uninitiated will not get beyond the "oripeaux des langages mortels" to the true meaning, but will be satisfied merely to admire "comme au théâtre, l'harmonie physique, l'écorce brillante, la sensuelle beauté, la phraséologie!" (Axël, 30). The initiate, however, the verbal adept who is colleague of the verbal alchemist, will recognize that the veiled beauty, not the surface tinsel, is the essential:

> la pensée seule vivra: les mots changent et se démodent vite; la pensée seule vivra, --car au fond des choses, il n'y a ni mots ni phrases, ni rien autre chose que ce qui anime ces voiles! La pensée seule apparaîtra... l'impression de l'oeuvre seule restera!...[181]

Just before his renunciation of Janus's teachings, Axël expresses his desire to penetrate beyond the veil of language and thus contact the creative life forces directly without benefit of intermediary:

> Forces-vives qui assemblez les lois de la Substance, Etres occultes en qui se conçoivent les générations des éléments, des hasards, des phénomènes, --oh! si vous n'étiez pas impersonnels! Si les termes abstraits, les creux exposants, dont nous voilons vos présences, n'étaient que de vaines syllabes humaines! Et dans la chaîne des contacts infinis, s'il était un point où l'Esprit de l'homme, affranchi de toute médiation, pouvait se trouver en un rapport avec votre essence et s'agréger votre énergie! (Axël, 212)

Axël, who is feeling the inadequacy of human language for the expression of the ideal, the truth Villiers believes it is the task of language to reveal,[182] desires his own immediate experience of the secret meaning of existence. Such an attitude to language and the ideal leads, however, to an emphasis on silence, and thus to a self-denying aesthetic. In "Hamlet," Villiers writes "Toute libre intelligence ayant le sens du sublime sait que le Génie pur est, essentiellement, silencieux, et que sa révélation rayonne plutôt dans ce qu'il sous-entend que dans ce qu'il exprime."[183]

It is not surprising, then, to find that silence is important in Axël. In his speech to Kaspar in Part II, Axël insists on preserving the silence of his forest at all costs:

> Le silence de la grande Forêt--marche dont je suis le margrave--n'est pas à vendre: il m'est plus cher que toutes paroles: c'est un bien sacré, dont je n'entends pas qu'on m'exproprie et dont l'or de vos banques ne m'indemniserait pas. (Axël, 159)

As Peter Bürgisser points out, "la rêverie se fait dans le silence. C'est dans le silence que naissent les grandes idées, que se créent les images poétiques."[184] It is in silence that man is able to approach the sublime. Kaspar does not understand this: for him silence is empty, meaningless. Axël tells him,

> il est fort concevable que vous préfériez l'Or (dût-il n'être que fictif) à tous les silences, --puisque le Silence ne représente rien pour vous, qu'un bâillement. En effet, ce mot, vide quand vous usurpez le droit de le prononcer, n'a pas (bien que de mêmes syllabes) l'ombre d'une parenté avec celui que j'ai proféré tout à l'heure. C'est en vain que vous essayez de les confondre en une même valeur... (Axël, 160)

The silence that Axël desires is the silence of the infinite. In Part IV, as Sara and Axël move towards transcendence, "silence" appears in the stage directions on almost every page, often several times. Finally, in the last speech of the play, Sara urges, "puisque l'infini seul n'est pas un mensonge, enlevons-nous, oublieux des autres paroles humaines, en notre même Infini!" (Axël, 270). The play closes with the contrast between "le silence du lieu terrible où deux êtres humains viennent ainsi de vouer eux-mêmes leurs âmes à l'exil du CIEL" and the "bourdonnement de la Vie" (Axël, 271).

Bürgisser sums up the self-negation of Villiers's aesthetic in these words:

> l'art est . . . . une tentative faite pour exprimer ce qui est, essentiellement, inexprimable. C'est pourquoi toute oeuvre d'art est vouée, par principe, à l'échec. Le monde de l'absolu ne se manifeste entièrement que dans le silence, ce qui serait en même temps la négation de l'art.[185]

What replaces art, in fact life, for those who put such an emphasis on the silence of the absolute, is "le rêve." Because the mundane realities of life cannot hope to approach the beauties of the ideal, the artist withdraws from life into the world of the imagination.

Thus the old man of "L'Elu des rêves" lives in squalor with his dreams, although he possesses a fortune. The poet Alexis Dufrêne understands the old man's attitude well, criticizing unimaginative friends for being too involved with what they mistake for the real world:

> C'était bien la peine de se moquer de mon rêve, pour aller s'effrayer d'une ombre, et revenir du Réel en se bouchant le nez!... Voilà ce que c'est que de n'avoir aucun talent!... --Au dédain de cet Imaginaire, qui seul, est réel pour tout artiste sachant commander à la vie de s'y conformer, ils ont préféré s'en remettre à leurs sens en se figurant qu'on peut voir ce qu'il y a![186]

Dufrêne inherits the old man's money and goes to live a faery tale life in Nepal, "une existence de radjah"[187] which Bürgisser describes as "une continuation purement imaginaire de l'héritage du vieillard par le poète."[188]

In Axël the disdain for life and preference for "le rêve" is one of the contributing factors in the suicides of Axël and Sara who prefer the "mirages" (Axël, 261), the imaginary beauties of unconsummated love and Sara's poetic invocation of far off places to "les vaines évidences de la terre" (Axël, 242). Although Rémy de Gourmont attributes the fragment from which the following quotation is taken to a version of "Le Tzar et les Grands-ducs," Axël would certainly have understood the sentiments:

> Les sites "poétiques" me laissent presque toujours assez froid, --attendu que, pour tout homme sérieux, le milieu le plus suggestif d'idées réellement "poétiques" n'est autre que quatre murs, une table et de la paix. Ceux-là qui ne portent pas en eux l'âme de tout ce que le monde peut leur montrer auront beau le regarder; ils ne le reconnaîtront pas, toute chose n'étant belle que selon la pensée de celui qui la regarde et la réfléchit en lui-même.[189]

When the mirages become reality and "La Terre . . . est devenue l'Illusion," then the only logical course of action left is to say with Axël "Vivre? les serviteurs feront cela pour nous" (Axël, 261). It is precisely this attitude that leads Edmund Wilson to say that "this super-dreamer of Villiers's is the type of all the heroes of the Symbolists."[190] According to the very special interpretation that Peter Brooks says the symbolists placed on Shakespeare's hero, Axël is the nineteenth-century Hamlet:

> the man who has renounced the world in a search for the ideal and the absolute, for an hermetic space, for le rêve in the sense of the useless yet creative and ever sacred day-dreaming described in the closing sonnet of the Poésies [of Mallarmé].[191]

Wilson sees Axël as the spokesman of the symbolists who shift "the field of literature altogether, as . . . Axel had done the arena of life, from an objective to a subjective world, from an experience shared with society to an experience savored in solitude."[192] The result of this shift is the solipsism found throughout Axël and reflected in such passages as "il n'est d'autre univers pour toi que la conception même que s'en réfléchit au fond de tes pensées" and "Si tu veux . . . posséder [la Vérité], crée-là! comme tout le reste!" (Axël, 205, 206).

Still, man is by nature gregarious and the total silence of solipsistic revery is essentially foreign to him. Mallarmé does more than day-dream, he writes the sonnet about his revery; Villiers does not restrict himself to solitary and silent contemplation of the "au-delà," he writes Axël for, like it or not, men of genius have a role to play in this world:

> ils tiennent d'un monde supérieur, occulte, dont ils attestent l'existence. Ce sont des missionnaires d'une vie ultérieure: ils avertissent; ils élèvent.[193]

Genius may be doomed to fail in its aim to express the inexpressible, but if it wishes to share its experience, it must in some way, however inadequate, communicate the message of the sublime, the "au-delà":

> lorsqu'il [le Génie] daigne apparaître, se rendre sensible aux autres esprits, il est contraint de s'amoindrir pour passer dans l'Accessible. Sa première déchéance consiste d'abord à se servir de la parole, la parole ne pouvant jamais être qu'un très faible écho de sa pensée.
>
> Secondement, il est obligé d'accepter un voile extérieur--une fiction, une trame, une histoire, --dont la grossièreté est nécessaire à la manifestation de sa puissance et à laquelle il reste complètement étranger; il ne dépend pas, il ne crée pas, il transparaît![194]

The words, the exterior veil, may be inadequate to their tasks and art may remain ever but an approximation of the ideal, yet the attempt at artistic expression of this ideal must be made, for it is essential to the nature of both man and the ideal:

> L'animal est exact: sa naissance lui confère avec la vie cette fatalité; l'homme, au contraire, est essentiellement indéterminé: il hésite, d'une manière toujours ascensionnelle, toujours approximative, vers son idéal! Ce qui fait le fond de ses plus sublimes espérances, ce qui allume sur son front la lueur de l'immortalité, c'est précisément le sentiment de cette gravitation. En un mot, l'homme sent qu'il n'est pas fini![195]

In a footnote to this passage Villiers explains: "L'idéal, suivant Gottlieb Fichte, est 'ce qui doit toujours être réalisé, mais en même temps ce qui ne peut jamais l'être, sous peine de cesser d'être ce qu'il doit être, c'est-à-dire de cesser d'être l'idéal.'"[196] Art, a type of transformation, is an image of man, himself a form in constant metamorphosis. Only in death is art no longer necessary, for then the final transformation has taken place, the alchemical gold has been attained, the ideal achieved.

A.W. Raitt describes Villiers's aesthetic in these words:

> Au fond, Villiers s'intéressant avant toutes choses à la portée philosophique de l'art, la forme est pour lui (en théorie, sinon dans la pratique) d'importance secondaire. Vers la fin de sa vie, il désavouait complètement toute idée de l'art pour l'art et jugeait des oeuvres artistiques d'après des considérations philosophiques et religieuses.[197]

Raitt feels that Villiers's insistence on the artist's freedom to choose his subject matter (set forth in such articles as "A propos d'un livre," 1863; "Hamlet," 1867; and "Peintures décoratives de l'Opéra," 1874) is an early attitude incompatible with his later commitment to "la portée philosophique de l'art" (in, for example, "Souvenir," 1887). I disagree. Raitt has not noticed the distinction between "parole" and "verbe," between stated surface subject (the necessary but suggestive veil) and real inner subject (the "sens du sublime" which can only be implied). Since the veil is unimportant in itself, the artist is free to choose his topic where he will. This is not, however, strictly speaking art for art's sake. If Villiers's aim is "épater le bourgeois," it is not simply for the sake of shock but to awaken the select few to awareness of the "portée philosophique," the beauty which will shine through the veil. Jean-Paul Gourevitch makes an important distinction about Villiers's work:

> L'oeuvre de Villiers est signifiante, elle n'est pas significative. Ce n'est pas vers une révélation que nous conduit l'écrivain mais vers une constellation de signes dont chacun n'a pour but que de nous faire entrevoir le grand "saut," de nous faire dépasser l'apparence sensible.[198]

The task of the artist is the same as that of Janus, the alchemical Master, who does not teach, but illuminates, who encourages the student to discover his own gold within.

Since the metamorphic process of alchemy is cyclic, ending where it begins, the work itself, l'Oeuvre is of central importance. Although Villiers might not go so far as Mallarmé to say that "tout, au monde, existe pour aboutir à un livre,"[199] still he emphasizes the importance of the artistic work, insisting that men of genius "n'ont d'autres enfants que leurs oeuvres."[200] The emphasis in Axël on alchemy is symptomatic of Villiers's fascination with l'Oeuvre, a fascination shared with the rest of the symbolists.[201]

In The Symbolist Aesthetic in France, A.G. Lehmann discusses three aspects of l'Oeuvre as "total art" (Gesamtkunstwerk): art as the union of all the arts; art as the union of myth and music to create universal appeal; art as "a general interpretation of Life."[202] In Axël Villiers attempts to achieve all three types of "total art." Music and dance or gesture play almost as vital a role in Axël as language does. Although the musical element is not as conspicuous in Axël as it is in Villiers's earlier play, Le Nouveau-Monde (for which Villiers himself composed the themes incorporated into Alexandre Georges's score), it is nonetheless certain, both from internal and external evidence,[203] that music was meant to play an integral role in Axël, which was still being revised at Villiers's death. From Part I through to the final scenes the text gives indications for musical accompaniment of various sorts. Bells ring, choirs chant, organs and harps play, hunting horns sound, choruses sing, and Ukko sings a solo. Most telling of all, perhaps, is the stage direction, "Harpes redisant dans l'ombre le chant des Rose-Croix" (Axël, 247; emphasis mine). This direction clearly implies more music was intended than is actually indicated in the text, for there is no other mention of the song of the Rosy-Cross.

Although strictly speaking there is no dancing on stage in Axël (as there is in Villiers's Morgane), gesture is important. There are striking choreographic effects throughout the play. Rodolphe Palgen comments on this aspect of the play: "Les gestes lentes et hiératiques des personnages semblent indiquer que Villiers, sans le savoir, suppose toujours l'interprétation musicale des gestes et des poses."[204] I have already mentioned the recurrent silences in Axël. Mime, sometimes in conjunction with music, frequently carries the action. In fact, the play opens with mime. The importance of this art form to Villiers's play is obvious when we realize that of the nine scenes in Part I, Sara is on stage and a central figure in all but three of them, and yet in the whole of Part I she speaks only one word: "Non."

Villiers's concern with the messianic mission of Axël and Sara and the role of the artist, the man of genius, as missionary from, and interpreter of the "vie ultérieure" is a reflection of his desire to achieve the second aspect of total art: the union of myth and music for universal appeal.[205] Bürgisser describes the connection between Villiers's self-negating aesthetic and the social role of l'Oeuvre:

> Cette négation de la poésie par elle-même est essentielle dans l'oeuvre de notre poète et trouve son expression la plus révélatrice dans la forme du mythe sauveur [y inclus les mythes de l'or et de l'amour].
>
> Pour Villiers, toute oeuvre poétique doit être, essentiellement, un "mythe" sauveur, parce qu'il n'existe pas de chef-d'oeuvre qui trouverait sa perfection en lui, n'étant jamais qu'un reflet incomplet de la perfection absolue en [l'Idéale]. Or, si le poète est celui qui doit nous conduire vers [l'Idéale], beauté parfaite, il doit nécessairement nier la beauté imparfaite de son oeuvre,

> il doit nous détacher de cette beauté incomplète pour ne pas nous arrêter dans notre élan vers l'absolu. C'est pour quoi, pour Villiers, l'oeuvre d'art ne doit étaler ses resplendissements que pour être rejetée, à la fin, en faveur d'un état supérieur de l'être, elle ne prend existence que pour être dépassée. Pourtant, il n'est pas question de douter du droit d'existence de l'oeuvre d'art: elle est nécessaire comme incarnation d'un état incomplet de l'homme, pour lui montrer justement que cet état est incomplet.[206]

With what Bürgisser terms "le mythe sauveur," Villiers is also aiming at the third aspect of Gesamtkunstwerk: the "vision of the total meaning of life" which Lehmann says "haunted the symbolists."[207] Lehmann elaborates on this characteristic of l'Oeuvre in relationship to Villiers's art:

> When Villiers de l'Isle Adam [sic] wrote his Axel, partly on the model of the Nibelung cycle, he assumed Wagner to have intended, and himself to have repeated, a work of art of epic dimensions in which the entire experience of Man is set out, ordered, and subordinated to a general interpretation of Life. Such was the Divina Commedia, or Faust; Villiers thought the Ring more than a straightforward anarchist's allegory of the growth of "pure humanity"; and he made his cycle [Axël] into a sort of repository for what he conceived to be the universal truths of idealism.[208]

Although the words in the following passage are Mallarmé's, they could well have been written by Villiers:

> J'ai toujours rêvé et tenté autre chose, avec une patience d'alchimiste, prêt à y sacrifier toute vanité et toute satisfaction, comme on brûlait jadis son mobilier et les poutres de son toit, pour alimenter le fourneau du Grand Oeuvre. Quoi? c'est difficile à dire: un livre qui soit un livre, tout bonnement, en maints tomes, un livre, architectural et prémédité, et non un recueil des inspirations de hasard fussent-elles merveilleuses... J'irai plus loin, je dirai: le Livre, persuadé qu'au fond il n'y en a qu'un, tenté à son insu par quiconque a écrit, même les Génies. L'explication orphique de la Terre, qui est le seul devoir du poëte et le jeu littéraire par excellence: car le rythme même du livre, alors impersonnel et vivant, jusque dans sa pagination, se juxtapose aux équations de ce rêve, ou Ode.[209]

Axël is a significant attempt to create what Lehmann terms the "negative fable" of symbolism, "its crowning glory, ever awaited but . . . never realized."[210] It may fall short of its goal, but Axël aims at the dreamt-of Ode, the "Grande Oeuvre" which would transform this chaotic and imperfect world of the mutable into the perfect and unchanging gold of the orphic vision in its ideal expression. Villiers would have understood the sentiments embodied by Yeats in "Sailing to Byzantium."

CHAPTER TWO

THE SEARCH FOR TIR-NA-N-OG: THE EARLY YEATS

Introduction

Yeats tells us that Axël seemed for him "part of a religious rite"[1] and "a foreshadower of the new sacred book, of which all the arts . . . [were] beginning to dream."[2] Whether we believe that he was directly influenced by Axël or feel, like Marilyn Gaddis Rose, that the French play was for Yeats merely a temporary enthusiasm, "an example . . . which reënforced some of his techniques and served as a point of departure for some of his speculations,"[3] it is clear that from the beginning of his career Yeats shared common interests with Villiers, particularly in transformation, alchemy, and the occult. Since Yeats's explicit interest in Villiers was strongest during his early and middle years, the time when his work most resembled that of the French symbolist, this chapter will focus on Yeats's writings until approximately 1914.

Richard J. Finneran has divided Yeats's early prose fiction into four separate categories: legendary, realistic, esoteric, and a combination of the first three.[4] This chapter is organized loosely along the lines of Finneran's classification, slightly modified and extended to all Yeats's genres. I shall approach the legendary material by means of The Island of Statues, that rather strange early blend of pastoral and Celtic components, moving through it (with excursions into other areas) to works based, like The Celtic Twilight and "The Wanderings of Oisin," primarily on Celtic tradition. I shall then look at works which, like The Secret Rose and The Stories of Red Hanrahan, frequently draw from this source but move beyond it, incorporating more of Yeats's own inventions and establishing his own legends. This second group of works is essentially transitional between the more tradition-based Celtic pieces and the third group, the esoteric writings like Rosa Alchemica. Relatively little will be said about the realistic works and the unfinished novel that represents Yeats's attempt at reconciling the legendary, realistic, and esoteric modes. Although I shall refer to The Speckled Bird on occasion, I shall not study it in depth simply because it is unfinished and the wealth of material published during Yeats's lifetime demands closer scrutiny. It is, however, an interesting work that deserves attention.

Although it actually belongs in the category of transitional works that incorporate both legendary and occult materials, I have left The Shadowy Waters till last. Because this work has been strongly influenced by Axël, and is concerned among other things with the question of illusion and reality, it is an appropriate transition between Axël and L'Eve future, the work on which Chapter Three focusses.

It is important to realize that despite this division of Yeats's works into more or less separate groupings there is considerable overlapping between groups. The legendary works, for instance, are never far removed from the esoteric.[5]

Into the Twilight: The Legendary Works

Although, as we shall see, the underlying significance of transformation is often quite similar in the writings of Yeats and Villiers, in the "legendary" works, whether predominantly traditional or invented, Yeatsian transformation differs from that found in Axël. In the French play, transformation is implied rather than directly expressed as a physical metamorphosis; the symbolism of alchemical transmutation with all its ramifications and hidden meanings permeates the work and culminates in the spiritual transformation at the end of the play. Yeats's esoteric writings involve such implicit transformation, but in his legendary works, metamorphosis is markedly "Ovidian": explicit and physical. (We find, for example, gods appearing on earth as stags, men changed into statues, and the bodies of lovers transformed at death, like those of Baucis and Philemon, into yew and apple trees.) In Axël, static surface symbols suggest hidden transformations which in turn are symbolic of deeper or more elevated significances, whereas in Yeats's legendary works, metamorphosis is itself the surface symbol.

We might expect metamorphosis to be important in somewhat later works of this period, like The Shadowy Waters and Rosa Alchemica where Villiers's influence has most commonly been observed. From the time of Yeats's earliest publications, however (several years before the probable date of his first encounter with Villiers), his writings contain instances of transformation and some at least of the accompanying constellation of themes, images, and associations which we shall observe in his later writings and have already seen linked with transformation in Villiers's work. This is true of even the first of Yeats's plays to be published, The Island of Statues: An Arcadian Faery Tale. Slight and derivative as it may be, this two act verse drama, which appeared in the Dublin University Review in 1885, contains in embryo many of the metamorphic patterns which concerned Yeats throughout this early period.[6]

Despite Yeats's fairly low opinion of the work (he felt it was "good of its kind"),[7] the play is a useful starting point for an examination of metamorphosis in Yeats's work because it places the concept in relation to one of the central themes running through his writings. The Island of Statues presents an early version of what was to become an ongoing dialectic for Yeats: the conflict between and opposing attractions to the natural, the objective, the actual; and the spiritual, the subjective, the ideal.[8] Eventually, Yeats's obsession with the conflict led to A Vision with its detailed and systematic study of the universal struggle between subjectivity and objectivity and the perpetual transformation of one into the other. We shall see that, in balance, Yeats does not really opt for either side of the dialectic, although at different times and in different works he favours one or the other. The ideal appears to be a love that always involves dangers, demands sacrifice. Yeats is never quite willing in the end to assume the risks that total commitment to the ideal entails, for as he observes in A Vision, "to die into the truth is still to die."[9]

Sister M. Bernetta Quinn has noted that Yeats's use of metamorphosis frequently involves a Celtic element drawn either from the pagan past (in which gods, traditional folk heroes, and certain personae created by Yeats play a role) or the Christian present (the still lingering Celtic twilight in which such characters as devils and witches are found).[10] As the subtitle, An Arcadian Faery Tale, suggests, The Island of Statues fits into this general pattern. Although the play does not take place in the present, it is set in Christian times.[11]

The heroine of The Island of Statues, a shepherdess named Naschina is, strictly speaking, more Arcadian than Celtic, but she is, nonetheless, an embodiment of what Yeats termed the "Celtic longing for infinite things the world has never seen."[12] Naschina is dissatisfied with the homely life in Arcadia and yearns for romance and adventure. The men of Arcady are, she feels, unexciting, for

> none
> Of all on whom Arcadian suns have shone
> Sustains his soul in courage or in might. (Plays, 1229)

Her suitors, the shepherds Colin and Thernot and the hunter Almintor, are precursors of such ordinary mortal lovers as O'Driscoll in "The Host of the Air" and Shawn Bruin in The Land of Heart's Desire. They have only song and simple domestic gifts to offer as proof of their love.

> Sheep-guiding, or the bringing some strange bird,
> Or some small beast most wonderfully furr'd,
> Or sad sea-shells where little echoes sit. . . (Plays, 1229)

cannot, Naschina laments, be compared to the great quests undertaken by knights who battle dragons or wage war with enchanters.

As we might expect, in order to satisfy Nashina's craving for heroic exploits and thus win her love, the men attempt feats of courage and daring. The two shepherds engage in a duel and Almintor embarks on a dangerous mission: to secure a magic flower found on an island guarded by a faery enchantress. Almintor's occupation as hunter makes him the best suited to go in search of what is clearly a symbol of the other world, the ideal.[13] Naschina's dissatisfaction with reality brings disaster on all three suitors. Colin kills Thernot in the duel and then drowns himself in answer to Naschina's appeal "That one shall die, unless one die for her" (Plays, 1248). When Almintor picks the wrong bloom from among the multitude on the island, like many who have preceded him, he is transformed into a statue of stone.

It is only when Almintor does not return from his quest that Naschina begins to realize that, pedestrian as he may have been, she misses him. Determined to find him, she takes the faery boat to the enchanted island where, disguised as a shepherd, she enchants the Enchantress, who reveals the whereabouts of "the goblin flower of joy" (Plays, 1232) and then vanishes. After Naschina uses the magic flower to release the statues from their "sleep," she and Almintor are chosen to reign over the island and its newly revived inhabitants.

Enid Starkie describes both Villiers and Yeats as idealistic Celts who, disgusted with materialism, have their "gaze fixed on the land of Tir-nan-Óg, the Isles of the Blest, beyond the setting sun."[14] Although in Yeats's writings there is an ambivalent attitude towards escapism and an almost constant vacillation "Between extremities" (Poems, 499) even in his private life, he was, as Marilyn Gaddis Rose remarks, "always fascinated by the Beyond."[15] Throughout Yeats's work, faeries are one means of representing this beyond; their domain, Tír-na-n-Og, stands as an image of all that elevates man above the ordinary and calls him away from everyday life. The isolated Island of Statues with its magic flower is an early instance of this recurring image, a forerunner, for example, of the three western isles to which the faery Niamh entices Oisin.

Faeryland is an appropriate image of the ideal, for there are found changeless beauty and love, immortality, wisdom, and self-determination. These qualities belong to the realm of the faeries by virtue of their origin. In Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry Yeats asks who the faeries are and gives a number of answers:

> "Fallen angels who were not good enough to be saved, nor bad enough to be lost," say the peasantry. "The gods of the earth," says the Book of Armagh. "The gods of pagan Ireland," say the Irish antiquarians, "the Tuatha De Danãn, who, when no longer worshipped and fed with offerings, dwindled away in the popular imagination, and now are only a few spans high."[16]

Without actually opting for any one of these explanations, later in this introduction to "The Trooping Fairies" Yeats gives evidence to support all three; throughout his work, however, he tends to treat the faeries as a combination of elemental powers and Tuatha De Danaan, with an admixture of Fomorians, the ancient "gods of night and death and cold" (Poems, 795) who were overcome by the Danaans. The editors of Druid Craft comment on Yeats's eclectic habits:

> Yeats took his mythological and occult sources seriously, of course, but he freely modified the personal symbolism he drew from them in response to poetic and dramatic criteria.[17]

They also note that throughout Yeats's work, "the order imposed is a dramatic rather than systematic structure."[18]

Although, as Yeats points out, the faeries are not always little but "seem to take what size or shape pleases them"[19] and are, in fact, more frequently elegantly tall and beautiful,[20] their sometimes diminished physical stature is, in part at least, representative of their reduced powers. The old gods have survived, they still have a glamour, a hold on this world, but their grip is no longer as strong as it once was. They may on occasion be bested by mortals, as the Enchantress is in The Island of Statues, as the "dusky demon" on the Island of Victories is in "The Wanderings of Oisin," as the faery man is in Dhoya, and the Red Man is in The Green Helmet.[21]

As the Tuatha De Danaan, descendants of the great mother goddess Dana, the faeries were originally "the powers of light and life and warmth" (Poems, 796). With the death of the heroic age and the coming of Christianity (represented in "The Wanderings of Oisin" by St. Patrick) they were transformed by the church into demons and consigned to "the burning stones of wide Hell" (Poems, 61). The Irish peasants were not, however, as categorical in their treatment of the old gods. Since, like mortal men, some were good, some bad, ~~and~~ some a bit of both,[22] they were pushed in the popular imagination out of the daylight, not into black night, but into the twilight, into the "dim kingdom"[23] of dream marked by lack of definition and, consequently, by metamorphosis. The Tuatha De Danaan became "the children of the . . . twilight."[24] All the scenes of The Island of Statues except the first one (which takes place entirely in the "real" world of Arcady) are set in the twilight. In "The Wanderings of Oisin," the poet and Niamh arrive and leave the first island in the twilight (Poems, 12-13, 25); on the second island, the battle with the dusky demon begins and ends at twilight time (Poems, 40-41); and on the third island, the Island of Forgetfulness, Oisin drops for one hundred years into the "delight/Of twilight and slumber" (Poems, 54).

Even though the old gods have been assigned to the twilight and they are sometimes conquered by mortals, victories over them are generally of short duration or mixed benefit, for the old gods still retain power, diminished as it may be. Oisin's vanquished demon returns perpetually on the fourth day to do battle once again; Dhoya's faery man reappears to win the faery mistress at chess; and in The Green Helmet, the Red Man returns with his severed head once more upon his shoulders.

This ultimate supremacy of the ancient supernatural forces is prefigured in The Island of Statues. Although Naschina's dominance seems complete because the Enchantress disappears, leaving only a dead frog behind, the "light of triumph" shines in the "goblin eyes" of the Enchantress before she fades away (Plays, 1253). Hers is the last laugh, for though the play appears to have a happy ending, a cloud hangs over it: when "The rising moon casts the shadows of Almintor and the Sleepers far across the grass," Naschina stands "shadowless" (Plays, 1258). The protection offered by the new god, symbolized by the image of St. Joseph on Naschina's necklace, is not strong enough to combat the power of the old gods: Naschina has been transformed into a faery and shall "Well nigh immortal . . . outlive [her] amorous happy time" (Plays, 1253).[25]

It is because of the lingering associations with the Tuatha De Danaan's dominion over "light, and warmth, and fruitfulness, and goodness"

(Poems, 810), that man is so attracted to the world of faery. Almintor describes what he hopes possession of the magic flower will bring:

> to her who wears that bloom comes truth,
> And elvish wisdom, and long years of youth
> Beyond a mortal's years. (Plays, 1232)

Later in the play, when Naschina appears in male disguise, the Enchantress tries to entice the "Fair shepherd" to remain on the faery island (Plays, 1248). Here, she says,

> no loves wane and wither,
> Where dream-fed passion is and peace encloses,
> Where revel of fox-glove is and revel of roses. (Plays, 1248)

Niamh paints for Oisin a similarly seductive picture of the faery world, adding to it luxury, dance, and "Danaan leisure," with herself as wife. She sums up the whole description in the line, "Music and love and sleep await" (Poems, 9).

It is natural that, as the old gods, the faeries should themselves possess and be able to grant to certain others, the gifts of immortality and changeless youth. Their immortality is, however, of a peculiar type, for, being without a soul, they may not enter into eternity but will endure only until the end of time when "the Boar without bristles" will come from the West and destroy the world (Poems, 153). It is in part because, having been transformed into a faery, she is now "doomed to melt at the Last Judgment like bright vapour"[26] that Naschina's is a Pyrrhic victory over the Enchantress. As the guardian spirits of the flowers warn,

> A man has a hope for heaven,
> But soulless a faery dies,
> As a leaf that is old, and withered, and cold,
> When the wintry vapours rise. (Plays, 1255)[27]

Meanwhile, however, the faeries are the Ever-living who dwell in Tír-na-n-Og, the Country of the Young,[28] a peaceful realm where "there is nor Change nor Death" (*Poems*, 19) and where mortal cares and sorrows are unknown. In *The Celtic Realms*, Myles Dillon and Nora K. Chadwick describe the home of the Tuatha De Danaan:

> it must be emphasized that the Land of Promise is sometimes identified as a supernatural region in the *síd*-mounds, the great barrows of the dead; sometimes as approached over the sea or a lake. It is a land where there is naught but truth; without death or decay, or sadness, or envy, or jealousy, or hate, or gloom, or pride, a land of plenty, of flocks and herds, of the ever-young, of flowers and fruit. It is *Mag Mell*, "the Delightful Plain," *Tír na nÓc*, "the Land of the Young"; "*Tír Tairngire*," "the Land of Promise."[29]

In his works, Yeats makes use of all three traditional sites of Tír-na-n-Og: for example, "Midhir's hill" in "The Harp of Aengus" (*Poems*, 219) is a *síd*-mound;[30] Oisin and Forgael seek the Land of Promise across the seas; *The Island of Statues* and "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" are reached by crossing a lake. The beauty of Innisfree alone implies that it represents Tír-na-n-Og; Yeats makes its association with the land of faery explicit in "The Danaan Quicken Tree" (*Poems*, 742-43).

Quoting from Ernest Renan's *The Poetry of the Celtic Races*, Yeats points out in "The Celtic Element in Literature" that the ancient Irish had "a love of Nature for herself, a vivid feeling for her magic."[31] Like all the ancient peoples of the world, Yeats writes, "They worshipped nature and the abundance of nature."[32] Yeats concludes, like Matthew Arnold in *The Study of Celtic Literature*, that "The Celtic passion for Nature comes almost more from a sense of her 'mystery' than of her 'beauty'."[33]

Part of the magic and mystery of nature was the combination of great variety and flux with patterned regularity and cyclic recurrence. As a result of being "nearer to ancient chaos"[34] than we are and attempting to impose on it some semblance of order, the Celts, like all races who have lived close to nature, developed a belief in metamorphosis:[35]

> Once every people in the world believed that trees were divine, and could take a human or grotesque shape and dance among the shadows; and that deer, and ravens and foxes, and wolves and bears, and clouds and pools, almost all things under the sun and moon, and the sun and moon, were not less divine and changeable.[36]

Perhaps as a consequence of their "'realistic naturalism,'"[37] of their close observation of nature's workings, the Celts perceived in nature an underlying unity, "one life flowing everywhere, and taking one quality here, another there."[38] It is a relatively short step from the observation that "Though leaves are many, the root is one" (Poems, 261) to the conclusion that man lives "in a world where anything might flow and change, and become any other thing."[39]

Yeats relates the folk view of nature as inherently metamorphic to occult tradition. In considering whether or not the faeries are the gods of the earth, he writes:

> Perhaps! Many poets, and all mystic and occult writers, in all ages and countries, have declared that behind the visible are chains on chains of conscious beings, who are not of heaven but of the earth, who have no inherent form but change according to their whim, or the mind that sees them. You cannot lift your hand without influencing and being influenced by hoards. The visible world is merely their skin. In dreams we go amongst them, and play with them, and combat with them. They are, perhaps, human souls in the crucible--these creatures of whim.[40]

Yeats elaborates further in a note to this passage:

> It has been held by many that somewhere out of the void there is a perpetual dribble of souls; that these souls pass through many shapes before they incarnate as men--

> hence the nature spirits. They are invisible--except at rare moments and times; they inhabit the interior elements, while we live upon the outer and the gross.[41]

Metamorphosis is, then, simultaneously a reflection of chaos, and an attempt by the perceiver to order it.

The souls in the crucible are not just those progressing towards birth for the first time, but also those awaiting re-birth, for the Celts believed in the special form of transformation that is metempsychosis.[42] When he returns from Tír-na-n-Og, Oisin reports to St. Patrick that he is about to re-enter the crucible of reincarnation:

> ancient Oisin knows,
> For he is weak and poor and blind, and lies
> On the anvil of the world. (Poems, 42)[43]

We are not told what Oisin's next life may be, but Yeats does give samples of reincarnation patterns in a number of lyrics of this period, including "Fergus and the Druid," "He Thinks of his Past Greatness when a Part of the Constellations of Heaven," and "The Three Hermits."

Although it is not drawn from Celtic material, I should like to look briefly at "Anashuya and Vijaya." An interesting instance of transmigration was the germ of Yeats's original plan for the work. In the notes which he added to "Crossways" from 1925 on, Yeats states that

> The little Indian dramatic scene was meant to be the first scene of a play about a man loved by two women, who had the one soul between them, the one woman waking when the other slept, and knowing but daylight as the other only night. It came into my head when I saw a man at Rosses Point carrying two salmon. "One man with two souls," I said, and added, "O no, two people with one soul." I am now once more in A Vision busy with that thought, the antitheses of day and night and of moon and of sun. (Poems, 841-42)

Vijaya's confusion of Anashuya and Amrita apparently stems from this source. The scene is set at twilight, the time appropriate to transition and the movement of souls which, like "the sacred old flamingoes" are at that hour "made/To wander by their melancholy minds" (Poems, 72). Since Anashuya has "brought [her] evening rice" and "The sun has laid his chin on the grey wood,/Weary, with all his poppies gathered round him" (Poems, 72), Yeats must have intended that her body be the night-time home of the wandering soul. Significantly, she is a priestess who, isolated in her forest temple "among the mouldering of ancient woods," in the hours of starlit "wandering quiet," intercedes with the gods, offering up "Prayers for the land" (Poems, 74, 73, 75). She belongs to the realm of the divine, of "mystery and dreams" (Poems, 74). In contrast, Amitra, the rival for both Anashuya's soul and the love of Vijaya, is a woman of the daylit world of ordinary life: she dwells "on the village border . . ./With her old father the blind woodcutter" (Poems, 74). Presumably, had Yeats completed the drama as he had originally intended, the daily wandering of Vijaya and of the one soul back and forth between the two women would have represented the eternal tug of war between the spiritual and the material. Even in its "unfinished" state, the poem embodies the embryo of this conflict.

One of the most interesting references to reincarnation in Yeats's poetry is found in "The Two Kings" where the unnamed faery man, who Celtic mythology tells us is the god Midhir, informs Queen Edain:

> "Woman,
> I was your husband when you rode the air,
> Danced in the whirling foam and in the dust,
> In days you have not kept in memory,
> Being betrayed into a cradle, and I come
> That I may claim you as my wife again." (Poems, 284)[44]

In Yeats's work we find Edain (variously spelled Etain and Adene) in a confusing variety of roles: as Midhir's wife ("Baile and Aillinn");

as Eochaid's wife ("The Two Kings"); and as Aengus's mistress ("The Harp of Aengus"). Dillon and Chadwick's explanation of the series of rebirths she goes through helps somewhat to dispel the confusion:

> Étaín lives in at least three generations, perhaps more, re-born each time, not just living on to old age. In each rebirth she keeps her own name, though her husband's name differs in every case. First she is Étaín wife of the god Midir in the síd-mound. Then she is Étaín wife of Eochaid, king of Tara. Then she is reborn as Étaín, her own daughter, indistinguishable from herself.[45]

Although in "The Two Kings" Midhir is unsuccessful in taking Edain back to Tír-na-n-Og, Yeats acknowledges in "The Broken Gates of Death" that Edain "passed with Midher into the enchanted hills,"[46] and in "The Harp of Aengus" we find her coming "out of Midhir's hill" (Poems, 219). Dillon and Chadwick describe what happened. When Midhir comes to reclaim Edain from Eochaid,

> Midir and Eochaid play at chess for high stakes. At first Midir allows Eochaid to win, and Eochaid lays the forfeit on Midir that he and his supernatural host are to build a great causeway across the bog of central Meath. When it is finished Midir again comes to play, and this time he wins, and demands a kiss from Étaín as his prize. [A kiss from the Tuatha De Danaan puts one in their power.] A month later he returns to claim it. While the king and his court are feasting, and all the entrances are barred, Midir appears in their midst in all his supernatural beauty and splendour, and carries off Étaín through the smoke-hole in the roof, and they are seen as two birds circling in the sky above the hall.[47]

It is possible to see Eochaid's forest battle with the great stag as Yeats's substitution for the first chess game, and to assume that another contest is yet to follow outside the confines of the poem. Such an hypothesis is unnecessary, however, in order to relocate Edain in Tír-na-n-Og for, as Midhir reminds Edain, at death her soul will return to the crucible, she will be back once more with him in the síd-mound:

> when you come to the deathbed
> You must return, whether you would or no,
> This human life blotted from memory. (Poems, 285)

All this does not, however, account for Edain's alliance with Aengus. Yeats tells us in a footnote to "Baile and Aillinn" that while she was Midhir's wife, Edain, "when driven away by a jealous woman, took refuge once upon a time with Aengus in a house of glass, and there I have imagined her weaving harp-strings out of Aengus' hair" (Poems, 188). Presumably the "jealous woman" then marries Midhir since, in "The Harp of Aengus," after Edain weaves the harp strings she is transformed into a fly by "Midhir's wife" (Poems, 219-20).

Although the Celtic belief in physical rebirth continued (with Christian influence, sometimes transformed into the doctrine of the resurrection of the body),[48] as the ancient chaos receded further into the past, the powers of metamorphosis that man had once attributed to everything remained only with the gods and those mortals who for some reason stand in special relationship to them. Thus we find in Yeats's work a close association between metamorphosis and the world of faery. Although their supernatural powers may be somewhat diminished, the Tuatha De Danaan still retain the ability to transform themselves at will, for they are the shape-shifters, "the wandering many-changing ones" (Poems, 182).

Only a hint of the faeries' power to control their form is found in The Island of Statues: when the Enchantress disappears, the dead frog remains behind. We do, however, encounter self-metamorphosis among supernatural beings in many other places in Yeats's work, including Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry (Merrows or mermaids, for instance, "Sometimes . . . come out of the sea, and wander about the shore in the shape of little hornless cows");[49] "The Wanderings of Oisin" (the dusky demon "changed and ran/Through many shapes" [Poems, 40]); Dhoya (the red-capped stranger became "a bundle of reeds" in Dhoya's hands);[50] The Celtic Twilight (the Amadán-na-Breena, or faery fool, is just one of the many shape-shifters recorded);[51] "Fergus and the Druid" (the Druid has "changed and flowed from shape to shape" [Poems, 102]);[52] and "Baile and Aillinn" (Aengus changes from a ragged old man to one "Tall, proud and ruddy" [Poems, 195]).

The old gods also have the ability to transform mortals who trespass into their domain or for some reason come within their power. Those who, without proper guidance and knowledge, seek the goblin flower in The Island of Statues become "sleepers" of stone; a villager struggling to prevent a little girl from being carried off by faeries discovers, not the girl, but a broomstick in his hands;[53] Aengus changes lovers into a "white deer with no horns" and "a hound with one red ear" (Poems, 153) in one poem, and into two swans "Linked by a gold chain each to each" (Poems, 194) in another; and Midhir's wife turns Edain into a fly (Poems, 220).

As we shall see shortly, certain types of metamorphosis do occur in the objective world. It is an interesting paradox, however, that while change belongs to the mortal sphere of the living, where "We and the labouring world are passing by" (Poems, 112), metamorphosis is more closely associated with the unchanging world of "those who are alive for ever and ever" (Poems, 223), the world "Where time is drowned in odour-laden winds/And Druid moons, and murmuring of boughs" (Poems, 219), the Land of Promise, Tír-na-n-Og. This phenomenon is related to the faeries' role as gods of the earth and their association with three elements in particular: the changeable but nonetheless enduring air, water, and fire.[54] Of these, air is the most important with respect to the puzzling presence of metamorphosis in the changeless world of faery. The Tuatha De Danaan, Yeats tells us in a note to The Wind Among the Reeds, are also known as the Sidhe, which is Gaelic for wind.[55] The designation is an apt one for shape-shifters who are ever-changing, yet, paradoxically, ever the same. In The Golden Dawn, Regardie writes of Yesod, the ninth Sephirah or emanation of the Infinite Light of the Qabalistic Tree of Life:

> This is the airy sphere of the fourth dimension, termed in occultism the Astral plane. Here we find the subtle electro-magnetic substance into which all the higher forces are focussed, the ether, and it constitutes the basis or final model upon which the physical world is built. Its elemental attribution is that of Air, ever flowing, shifting, and in a constant flux--yet because of that flux, in perpetual stability.[56]

I have spoken of Tír-na-n-Og as the realm of transcendence. The association of the faeries with the wind, however, suggests that their domain may also be seen as simply one stage in the climb to unity with the eternal, with the Unknown Infinite Light, the Ain Soph Aour of the Qabalah. The peculiar type of immortality possessed by the faeries supports this conclusion. Allen R. Grossmann observes that "The wind which blows between heaven and earth is not merely an element; it is a distinctly defined region having its own inhabitants and a special relation to what is above and what is below."[57] He continues, quoting Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim:

> [Air] is a vital spirit, passing through all beings, giving life and substance to all things, binding, moving and filling all things. Hence it is that the Hebrew doctors reckon it not among the elements, but count it as a medium or glue, joining things together, and as the resounding spirit of the world's instrument. It immediately receives into itself the influences of all celestial bodies and then communicates them to the other elements, as also to all mixed bodies.[58]

The twilight zone setting of Tír-na-n-Og also suggests the transitional nature of the transcendence achieved there. In discussing the personal transformation of the individual undergoing spiritual initiation, Grossman associates twilight with the crucible:

> The meaning of "twilight" from this point of view is the condition of the uninitiated, the unborn, who awaits in his limbonic state the coming of the light from within.[59]

There are both positive and negative sides to being in the crucible:

> The dynamic aspect of twilight is the access it affords to vision, the beginning of ideal self-definition; its negative aspect [exhibited in "Michael Robartes asks Forgiveness because of his Many Moods"], is the mere confusion of the unborn.[60]

Since he is a poet, not a systematic philosopher, Yeats is not consistent in his view of Tír-na-n-Og. Sometimes for him the region represents the desired end point of spiritual transformation, and at other times a transitional state on the path.

The desire expressed in The Island of Statues under the guise of Naschina's romantic yearning and Almintor's quest for the goblin flower is essentially the same desire, springing from the same roots, as that represented by Oisin's journey with Niamh to the three faery isles and by Forgael's search in The Shadowy Waters over the "waste sea" for the land "Where the world ends" (Poems, 226-27). What Sister M. Bernetta

Quinn calls "the search for an absolute,"[61] the mortal's longing for excape from the perpetual flux of the natural world where "'Everything alters,/And one by one we drop away'" (Poems, 208) is a result of existential ennui, the immeasurable and permanent world-weariness Yeats felt characterized the late nineteenth century. The malaise that generates this yearning to escape arises from discontent with nature and the natural order because, Yeats says, "positive science, the interpreter of exterior law,"[62] and the nineteenth-century god progress, that "slow dying of men's hearts,"[63] have stripped nature of her old mystery and magic:

> Man has wooed and won the world, and has fallen weary, and not, I think, for a time, but with a weariness that will not end until the last autumn, when the stars shall be blown away like withered leaves. He grew weary when he said, "These things that I touch and see and hear are alone real," for he saw them without illusion at last, and found them but air and dust and moisture.[64]

Escape may come through the power of metamorphosis, which, because it constitutes "command over form" is, as Sister M. Bernetta Quinn points out, one means of transcending the finite.[65] In Tír-na-n-Og the transformational powers lost to ordinary mortals in ancient times may be regained. Although metamorphosis occurs in the finite world, it is a negative force here, the degenerative, uncontrollable transformation that comes with old age. As Oisin returned from Tír-na-n-Og, the Old Pensioner, and the Old Men Admiring Themselves in the Water all discover (Poems, 60, 131, 208), time transfigures everything:

> They had hands like claws, and their knees
> Were twisted like the old thorn-trees
> By the waters. (Poems, 208)

Clearly, in the world of time "'All that's beautiful drifts away/Like the waters'" (Poems, 208).

The desire to frustrate this gradual deterioration, to "[mock] at Time and Fate and Chance" (Poems, 20) by stepping, like Oisin, into the world of faery, involves a double movement: away from the passive transformation of slow but progressive erosion and towards the active, self-determined and instantaneous metamorphosis of dynamic stasis. Thus the speaker in "The White Birds," tired of the meteoric flame of transient sexuality even "before it can fade and flee," and wearied of the passionate fire of Venus--"the blue star of twilight, hung low on the rim of the sky"--longs to be changed with his love "to white birds on the wandering foam" (Poems, 122). This transformation will allow the lovers to escape the fertile power of "those dreamers, dew-dabbled, the lily and rose," which are, respectively, the masculine and feminine emblems of human generation (Poems, 122).[66]

The traditional symbolism associated in the western world with the colour white and with birds suggests that the metamorphosis desired in "The White Birds" is the positive one of aspiration after purification and spirituality. Their relationship with the heavens, with the air and free-ranging flight, makes birds obvious symbols for the human soul and sublimation, the quest for the divine. Cirlot elaborates on bird symbolism:

> Generally speaking, birds, like angels, are symbols of thought, of imagination and of the swiftness of spiritual processes and relationships. They pertain to the Element of air and . . . they denote "height" and--consequently--"loftiness" of spirit.[67]

In Yeats, birds frequently take on a further specialized significance, being particularly associated with Aengus, the Celtic god of love "who changed four of his kisses into birds."[68] Aengus was fond of subjecting lovers to the same transformation so that, like Baile and Aillinn, spiritualized, relieved of the contingencies of the flesh and changeable human emotions, they might "Have happiness without an end" (Poems, 195). In a note which followed the title when the poem was first published in The National Observer (May 1892), Yeats gives a clue to the nature of the transformation longed for by the speaker in "The White Birds": "The birds of fairyland are said to be white as snow. The Danaan Islands are the islands of the fairies" (Poems, 121 var.). In the poem itself, Yeats links the desire for transformation with transcendence by evoking the image of Tír-na-n-Og:

> I am haunted by numberless islands, and many a Danaan shore,
> Where Time would surely forget us, and Sorrow come near us
> no more;
> Soon far from the rose and the lily and fret of the flames
> would we be,
> Were we only white birds, my beloved, buoyed out on the foam
> of the sea! (Poems, 122)

It is important to notice that although metamorphosis can be seen as an attempt to elude the bonds of the physical world, at this stage Yeats's images of transformation, linked as they are with the faeries and the ancient nature religion, almost all involve metamorphosis into or from natural objects and creatures or supernatural ones having their semblance. By drawing these images from nature Yeats hopes to give back to her the mystery and magic she had before the harsh lights of rationalism, materialism, and progress were turned on her. In Yeats's later works this is no longer the cas[illegible] estrangement from nature becomes more marked and Yeats takes his images of metamorphosis from the world of artifice. The best known example is, of course, the golden bird upon the golden bough in "Sailing to Byzantium."

Because form is both an expression of, and determining factor in, function and content or meaning, control over form is also control over significance. Thus, in the spirit world, Yeats tells us,

> The Bright Powers [angels] are always beautiful and desirable, and the Dim Powers [the Tuatha De Danaan, faeries] are now beautiful, now quaintly grotesque, but the Dark Powers [demons, the pre-Danaan Fomoroh] express their unbalanced natures in shapes of ugliness and horror.[69]

In his early works, control over form means for Yeats escape from form, from the "'externality'" which he believed prevented the "spontaneous expression of an interior life."[70] Later the same control provides a means of escaping into form. In a 1903 letter to George Russell Yeats writes:

> The close of the last century was full of a strange desire to get out of form, to get to some kind of disembodied beauty, and now it seems to me the contrary impulse has come. I feel about me and in me an impulse to create form, to carry the realization of beauty as far as possible.[71]

Even a cursory glance at his writings will reveal that Yeats's style reflects this switch in attitude towards form. In the early works, as Yeats himself observed in a letter to Katharine Tynan written in 1888, he had "been going about on shoreless seas. Nothing anywhere has clear outline. Everything is cloud and foam."[72] The elusive and formless elements of wind, fire, and water dominate and there is the indefiniteness of a twilight dream everywhere. As time passes and Yeats's interest in form grows stronger, his style becomes more and more concrete.

2

In works like The Island of Statues, "The Wanderings of Oisin," and The Wind Among the Reeds, however, Yeats is still revelling in "the autumn of the body" and seeking to remove the restrictions imposed by form.[73] Because he felt Villiers had managed to free himself from the limitations and exigencies of the external, Yeats was attracted to his work, believing him to be in the vanguard of a great new literary movement that expressed that desire "to get to some kind of disembodied beauty," to approach the spiritual and the subjective. In Axël, "the first great dramatic invention of the new [romanticism]," Yeats wrote,

> Count Villiers de l'Isle-Adam swept together, by what seemed a sudden energy, words behind which glimmered a spiritual and passionate mood, as the flame glimmers behind the dusky blue and red glass in an Eastern lamp; and created persons from whom has fallen all even of personal characteristic except a thirst for that hour when all things shall pass away like a cloud, and a pride like that of the Magi following their star over many mountains.[74]

Those who have this thirst and are able to rid themselves of personal characteristic, of the particularity of form, approach the universality of the archetype. Being self-determining, they become capable of the total self-possession that, Yeats believes, is transcendence: "Villiers de l'Isle-Adam quotes Thomas Aquinas as having said, 'Eternity is the possession of one's self, as in a single moment.'"[75] This complete self-possession is only possible for those who have control over form and have, in Villiers's words, been able to destroy all human limits, "assujettir par le détachement" (Axël, 192).

In The Hour-Glass Yeats uses an interesting image of inverse correspondence to convey this subjugation of the flesh through detachment. The pupils in the play choose as the subject of their lesson the passage:

> "There are two living countries, one visible and one invisible, and when it is summer there, it is winter here, and when it is November with us, it is lambing-time there." (*Plays*, 583)[76]

The image is an expression of the Heraclitean phrase often repeated by Yeats, to "live each other's death, die each other's life."[77] As the concept of interactive antithesis, such inverse correspondence became the heart of Yeats's symbolism of cones and gyres in *A Vision*.[78] The quotation is explained to the pupils in the following fashion by their master, the unbelieving Wise Man:

> The beggar who wrote that on Babylon wall meant that there is a spiritual kingdom that cannot be seen or known till the faculties, whereby we master the kingdom of this world, wither away like green things in winter. A monkish thought, the most mischievous thought that ever passed out of a man's mouth. (*Plays*, 585)

By the end of the play, the Wise Man recognizes that the writing on the Babylonian wall was not a mere monkish thought. When he dies, his soul, transformed into a white butterfly, is gathered into that spiritual kingdom which, in the 1903 prose version of the play, is symbolized by "the country of the fixed stars" (*Plays*, 636).

Since transcendence requires the withering away of man's mortal faculties, many of Yeats's early works treat the theme of renunciation which plays such a vital role in *Axël*. Oisin and Forgael might well have been in the room with Villiers's hero when Janus urged him,

> Epouse, en toi, la destruction de la Nature. Résiste à ses aimants mortels. Sois la privation! Renonce! Délivre-toi. . . . Ainsi, tu annuleras en toi, autour de

> toi, toute limite! Et, oublieux à jamais de ce qui fut l'illusion de toi-même, ayant conquis l'idée, --libre enfin, --de ton être, tu redeviendras, dans l'Intemporel, --esprit purifié, distincte essence en l'Esprit Absolu, --le consort même de ce que tu appelles Déité. (Axël, 199-200)

Without quite realizing it, and with more success than he would perhaps have wanted, this liberation into spirit is what Almintor seeks for Naschina when he goes in search of the goblin flower. Oisin, the Yeatsian prototype of all who thirst after deliverance, quite literally becomes the consort of deity when, leaving the natural world behind with his mortal friends and relatives, "Caoilte, and Conan, and Finn . . . Bran, Sceolan, and Lomair" (Poems, 3),[79] he accompanies Niamh to Tír-na-n-Og.

With Niamh as wife, Oisin is in possession of the supernatural wisdom, the changeless beauty and love promised to Naschina by the Enchantress, for Niamh is the daughter of Aengus, who besides being god of love, is god of youth, beauty, poetry, and ecstasy.[80] In a sense, Aengus is the incarnation of the essence of transcendence, the absolute symbolized by faeryland.

Sister M. Bernetta Quinn has observed that in Yeats's Celtic world metamorphosis is especially linked with Aengus.[81] Earthly love, Yeats implies, can transform man and transport him to another realm, where he shall live in eternity united with divine love. The spirits of the great lovers of history and legend, the Bailes and Aillinns, the Deirdres and Naoises, survive long after their bodies have disappeared from the face of the changing world, for Aengus transforms them into "Imperishable things, a cloud or a fire" (Plays, 376) or a pair of immortal birds. Metamorphosis, then, becomes a symbol of the sublimation of man in the eternity of agapé. In the domain of the absolute, love is deathless because the satiety that on earth leads to the extinction of desire and of love is impossible. Among the recurring images of "The immortal desire of Immortals" are the "hornless deer . . . chased by a phantom hound," and the lady with "an apple of gold in her tossing hand" followed by "a beautiful young man . . ./With quenchless gaze and fluttering hair" (Poems, 47, 11-12).[82]

At this stage in Yeats's work, the motif of renunciation is inherent in the concept of metamorphic love: as in Axël it is platonic love, love without physical contamination, which elevates man to the absolute.[83] Thus, as we have seen, the lover of "The White Birds" desires freedom from the flame of sexuality. Without this freedom, he will be unable to soar to where time and sorrow have no hold, but will, like the transformed Almintor, be immobilized by the stone weight of the flesh. Since transcendence can only be achieved through sacrifice, in The Island of Statues, Colin and Thernot must die for love of Naschina, so that she may pick the enchanted flower and attain all the sacred gifts it brings.[84]

Naschina herself must renounce this life in order to become one of the Ever-living: shadowless at the end of the play, she has passed over into the other world. Yeats was aware that the logical extension of divorce from the physical in order to enter totally into the spiritual is the ultimate renunciation epitomized for him by Villiers's phrase, "As for living, our servants will do that for us."[85] He was attracted to Axël in part because of the "moral" he found in it: "The infinite is alone worth attaining, and the infinite is the possession of the dead."[86] It is this infinite that calls to Oisin through his faery mistress and her father, the god of love.

As I have mentioned, Aengus was also the Celtic god of beauty, the supreme example of an entire divine race marked by this quality: "The old poets," Yeats writes, "thought that the tribes of the goddess Danu were of a perfect beauty, and the creators of beautiful people and beautiful arts."[87] Because he believed that beauty is "a gateway out of the net we were taken in at our birth,"[88] in Yeats's works, we find the arts, especially music, dance, and poetry closely associated with the faeries. A song calls Almintor to the enchanted Island of Statues where the flower spirits "Have clothed their tongues with song of songless days" (Plays, 1245). A "multitude of horns" (Plays, 1237) sound at his transformation into stone and later signal Naschina's arrival on the island. In "The Wanderings of Oisin" it is the rhymes of the Danaan poets that make Niamh fall in love with Oisin. The couple spends the first hundred years of Oisin's sojourn in faeryland on the Island of Dancing (also called the Island of the Living) where the air is filled with the music of birds, and the men and women sing and dance hand in hand.[89]

In the domain of the faeries, life is transformed into the immortal changeless beauty of art, for faery music, like the goblin flower of the Island of Statues, casts a spell that transports man out of the turmoil and sorrow of this world into the realm of dream, the realm of art. Oisin discovers the transforming power of faery music on the Island of Forgetfulness when the magic bell-branch sounds,

> Wrapt in the wave of that music, with weariness more than
> of earth,
> The moil of my centuries filled me; and gone like a
> sea-covered stone
> Were the memories of the whole of my sorrow and the memories
> of the whole of my mirth,
> And a softness came from the starlight and filled me full
> to the bone. (Poems, 51-52)

In his enchanted sleep Oisin dreams of "all who are winter tales" (Poems, 53), of the great heroes of old, the kings of the Red Branch and the Fenians. His description of this experience reminds us of the "sleepers" who have been transformed in The Island of Statues:

> So lived I and lived not, so wrought I and wrought not, with
> creatures of dreams,
> In a long iron sleep, as a fish in the water goes dumb as
> a stone. (Poems, 53)

The enchanted life he lives in his dreams is the life of art.

Those who enter the world of faery, who listen to the faery music "till all human cares and joys [drift] from their hearts,"[90] like the faery doctor who "knows by signs of secret wit" (Poems, 716), acquire in their dreams a special wisdom. Yeats tells us in the introductory poem to The Shadowy Waters that everything we know comes from the "immortal, mild proud shadows" "that cleave/The waters of sleep" (Poems, 218). In "Fergus and the Druid," tired of the weight of kingly duties, Fergus seeks to "learn the dreaming wisdom" that is the shape-shifter's (Poems, 103). He finally acquires it from the Druid's "little bag of dreams," since

> Wisdom and dreams are one,
> For dreams are the flowers ablow,
> And Wisdom the fruit of the garden:
> God planted him long ago. (Poems, 104, 743)

As we have seen, "truth/And elvish wisdom" are among the gifts sought for Naschina by Almintor. When the Enchantress disappears, Naschina takes on her "dreamless truth" (Plays, 1253); her eyes now opened, she recognizes that her world has been transformed:

> O Arcady, O Arcady, this day
> A deal of evil and of change hath crossed
> Thy peace. (Plays, 1255-56)

Aengus is associated with the wisdom of the faeries, as he is with the other attributes we have been examining. In "The Wanderings of Oisin," he lectures the new resident of Tír-na-n-Og at some length on what "makes the little planets run" (Poems, 18). At the end of his speech he falls "into a Druid swoon" that is the cue to the start of "a wild and sudden dance" of ecstasy celebrating the divine revelation that "God is joy and joy is God" (Poems, 20). In "Baile and Aillinn," after Aengus transforms the lovers into swans, they

> Have happiness without an end,
> Because they have made so good a friend.
> They know all wonders, for they pass
> The towery gates of Gorias,
> And Findrias and Falias,
> And long-forgotten Murias,
> Among the giant kings whose hoard,
> Cauldron and spear and stone and sword,
> Was robbed before earth gave the wheat. (Poems, 195-96)

Yeats explains in a footnote to the original edition of the poem that

> Findrias and Falias and Gorias and Murias were the four mysterious cities whence the Tuatha De Danaan, the divine race, came to Ireland, cities of learning out of sight of the world, where they found their four talismans, the spear, the stone, the cauldron, and the sword. (Poems, 188; emphasis mine)

The four talismans are the great ancient supernatural treasure that antedates even the Tuatha De Danaan. In the stories of Red Hanrahan, Yeats provides a gloss on their symbolism: the cauldron is pleasure, the stone is power, the spear is courage, and the sword is knowledge.[91]

A particularly interesting association of Aengus with wisdom occurs in the story "Where there is Nothing, there is God." Here Yeats has baptized the ancient Celtic god of love Brother Aengus, "the Lover of God, and the first of those who have gone to live in the wild places and among the wild beasts."[92] Through his prayers, this Aengus miraculously brings to the young scholar Olioll, "who had always been stupid and unteachable," such great knowledge "that he passed to the head of the class, and from that day was the best of scholars."[93]

Earlier I said that, although there are exceptions, metamorphosis is associated primarily with the changeless world of immortality. If we examine the instances of metamorphosis presented by Yeats, we find that they frequently occur when the two worlds collide, for "Indeed there are times when [they] are so near together that it seems as if our earthly chattels were no more than the shadows of things beyond."[94] In the times and spaces of transition--in the realm of dream and in the twilight hours--the boundaries of the two worlds are closest and the walls between them lowest. Access to Tír-na-n-Og and its treasures may then be most easily achieved, particularly by one of a group of mortals who stand in special relationship to the absolute and may thus serve as mediators. Among these are priests, lovers, people close to nature, fools, heroes, and above all in Yeats's work, poets and women.

Although, as we have seen, there is a brief flirtation in "Anashuya and Vijaya" with an Indian priestess, the sacerdotal function at this stage of Yeats's work is represented primarily by the priests of the old Irish religion, the Druids, and by those of the Christian dispensation. With the possible exception of Father Peter Gilligan, whose place at a sick bed was taken by a double, an angel in his form (Poems, 133-34), Yeats's Christian priests are generally not associated with metamorphosis nor the faery world of transcendence, save to oppose them. St. Patrick, in "The Wanderings of Oisin," and Father Hart, in The Land of Heart's Desire, attempt to turn Oisin and Mary Bruin towards the cross and the Christian God who

> by love alone
> . . . binds us to Himself and to the hearth,
> That shuts us from the waste beyond His peace,
> From maddening freedom and bewildering light. (Plays, 193)

Similarly, in Yeats's unfinished novel, The Speckled Bird, Father Gillam and the two young priests try to dissuade Michael from his "superstitions," his belief in visions and apparitions, ideas that they feel are dangerous to his soul.[95]

It is, as we might expect, the Druids who participate in the metamorphic world of faery. We see them in "To the Rose upon the Rood of Time," "Fergus and the Druids," and "Cuchulain's Fight with the Sea" as learned shape-shifters, magicians, who because of their "mystery," their role as intermediaries with the divine, are capable of transforming themselves or casting over others "delusions magical" (Poems, 111).[96]

It is unnecessary to elaborate further at this point on the special relationship between lovers and the absolute, since we have already seen the important role in metamorphosis played by Aengus in his capacity as god of love.

In Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry, Yeats quotes Paracelsus on the attitude of spirits to man:

> They have . . . an aversion to self-conceited and opinionated persons, such as dogmatists, scientists, drunkards, and gluttons, and against vulgar and quarrelsome people of all kinds; but they love natural men, who are simple-minded and childlike, innocent and sincere, and the less there is of vanity and hypocrisy in a man, the easier will it be to approach them.[97]

Given this, it is not surprising to discover Yeats's strong interest in the peasants, nor to find, in works like The Celtic Twilight and Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry, "peasant visionaries" supplying "the small gossip of faerydom--the little stitches that join this world and the other."[98]

The peasantry and those generally regarded as fools, because of their open simplicity and proximity to nature's "never-fading mystery,"[99] are gifted with the wisdom and vision that can only "awaken in [the] mind, wherein is nothing from the world."[100] In Yeats's work, as in the Celtic tradition, "the wisdom of the fools . . . [is] above all the wisdom of the wise" (Poems, 801) because the self, which is the base of the false knowledge of the mortal rational world, "is broken in pieces by foolishness."[101] This shattering of the self lowers the barriers between this world and the transcendent, allowing that true wisdom "which ancient peoples, and all wild peoples even now, think the only wisdom" to cross into the "dim" twilight mind of the fool, granting him "glimpses of much that sanctity finds at the end of its painful journey."[102] It is Yeats's stress upon this special and consecrated wisdom, standing in opposition to everything which might be termed scientific knowledge, that leads Grossman to apply to Yeats's work "the Augustinian distinction between scientia and sapientia," Yeats, of course, "Following Blake and the whole Romantic tradition of Wisdom" in preferring sapientia (or sophia) to scientia.[103] The wisdom even of the men of genius, among whose number Yeats includes Villiers, is based to a certain extent on the destruction of the rational:

> The errors in the handiwork of exalted spirits are as the more fantastical errors in their lives; as Coleridge's opium cloud; as Villiers de l'Isle-Adam's candidature for the throne of Greece; as Blake's anger against causes and purposes he but half understood; as that veritable madness an Eastern scripture thinks permissible among the saints; for he who half lives in eternity endures a rending of the structures of the mind, a crucifixion of the intellectual body.[104]

This crucifixion is one form of the sacrifice, renunciation, and indeed death, which are essential to the attainment of transcendence. Yeats makes the association explicit, stating in "The Queen and the Fool" that "foolishness may be a kind of death" and that "Wisdom and beauty and power may sometimes, as I think, come to those who die every day they live."[105] This is part, at least, of the significance behind the poem from The Wind Among the Reeds entitled, "The Cap and Bells" (Poems, 159-61), the poem which, according to Allen R. Grossman, "after 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree,' is the most popular of the poems Yeats wrote before he was forty."[106]

A jester, who may be seen to represent any mere mortal who has vain and foolish aspirations beyond his capacities or station, loved a young queen who, whatever else she may suggest, is an image of the sovereignty of the divine. Walking in the garden of life one evening at twilight, when "The garden had fallen still," the jester offered his soul to the queen. He bade it "rise upward/And stand on her window-sill." "When owls began to call," it rose, clad in the "straight blue garment" of the spirit and of the rational intellect ("It had grown wise-tongued by thinking"). The queen, uninterested in the jester's soul, closed her window and shut him out of eternity.

Undaunted, in the twilight of dawn, "When the owls called out no more," the jester offered his heart to the queen, sending it to her door in the "red and quivering garment" of the flesh to sing an alba, for "It had grown sweet-tongued by dreaming/Of a flutter of flower-like hair." But the queen was no more interested in the jester's bodily passion than she was in his mind and soul.

He decided to make one final effort to win her attention. This time he made no direct assault on his goal; he left off his hubristic attempts to penetrate into the divine domain symbolized by the queen's room and, instead, in the twilight "when the morning whitened," simply left his last gift for her to find "where she went by." What he offered in the end stands in contrast to the lofty gifts of heart and soul sent earlier.[107] All that remained to the jester were the humble emblems of his true nature: the cap and bells of the fool. In leaving these for the queen to find, the jester renounced all vain pretence, acknowledged what he was and made the ultimate sacrifice for his love by accepting death.

With death came triumph, however, because, through the image of cap and bells, the jester had presented the queen with his foolishness, the broken self that, paradoxically, allows unity with the divine. She accepted his sacrifice: laying the cap and bells on her bosom, she sang them a love-song "Till stars grew out of the air" in the evening twilight. The queen then opened her door and window and, allowing the jester's heart and soul to enter at last, she gathered them to her, uniting them in the eternity of wisdom, beauty, peace, and love:

> They set up a noise like crickets,
> A chattering wise and sweet,
> And her hair was a folded flower
> And the quiet of love in her feet. (Poems, 161)[108]

Since, as I have said, Aengus can be seen as the incarnation of the essence of transcendence, it is not surprising to find the fool closely associated with him, and not with just one facet of his divinity, as in the still-current expression "love's fool," but in all his aspects. Indeed, Yeats calls the fool "Aengus' messenger."[109] In the period we are concerned with here, he gives him key roles in The Hour-Glass, On Baile's Strand, and, through the dullard Olioll, in the short story "Where there is Nothing, there is God." Yeats also brings the fool into the background of the 1900 version of The Shadowy Waters as a strong influence on the action: it was the fool who gave Forgael his magic harp (Poems, 750), who made the images of quenchless desire--"the pale hound and the deer"--as "messengers to lure men to his peace," and it was

> The fool, who has made the wisdom that men write
> Upon thin boards of yew and apple wood,
> And all the wisdom that old images,
> Made of dim gold, rave out in secret tombs. (Poems, 764-65)

Like the fool, the hero is a man apart from the masses and, thus, especially susceptible to a particular relationship with the absolute. He is frequently a semi-divine figure. The most ancient of the Celtic heroes, the Fianna or Fenians, "The great military order of which Finn [father of Oisin] was chief" (Poems, 795), were, Yeats tells us, equals of the old Irish gods and "continually in their houses."[110] They could call on the gods for help, reminding them when they did that

> They are hardly so much individual men as portions of universal nature, like the clouds that shape themselves and reshape themselves momentarily, or like a bird between two boughs, or like the gods that have given the apples and the nuts.[111]

It is this very universality that, Yeats says, makes them so appealing to the imagination: "this but brings them the nearer to us, for we can remake them in our image when we will."[112]

Heroes remain always in special relationship to the divine, but by the time the Fenians have been replaced by the later Red Branch cycle of heroes, distance has grown up between the country of the gods and that of mortals like Cuchulain, who Sister M. Bernetta Quinn observes, is the legendary hero most frequently associated with metamorphosis in Yeats's works.[113] Although Cuchulain's father was "the god who wheels the sun" (Plays, 474), the god who assumed the shape of a hawk to impregnate a mortal woman (Plays, 485), Cuchulain's feet are more solidly in the world of man than were Finn's or Oisin's.[114] In "On Baile's Strand," Cuchulain tells the Young Man who, unknown to him, is his son:

> Boy,
> If I had fought my father, he'd have killed me,
> As certainly as if I had a son
> And fought with him, I should be deadly to him;
> For the old fiery fountains are far off
> And every day there is less heat o' the blood. (Plays, 511)

Nevertheless, "the pale windy people . . . have always been [Cuchulain's] friends" because he is like them: a wild passionate man "That lives like a bird's flight from tree to tree" and has "might of hand and burning heart" (Plays, 522, 493, 491). He is the bravest and most honourable of heroes, willing when others are not to offer his head to the Red Man of The Green Helmet in payment of the debt owed (Plays, 451); and he is, at times, even possessed of a certain wisdom that leads him to try to conciliate the wrangling heroes and turn the contentious green helmet "into a cup of peace" (Plays, 441). It is because of all these attributes that the Red Man, "The kindest of all Shape-Changers from here to the world's end" (Plays, 435), decides to award the special helmet to Cuchulain:

> I have not come for your hurt, I'm the Rector of this land,
> And with my spitting cat-heads, my frenzied moon-bred band,
> Age after age I sift it, and choose for its championship
> The man who hits my fancy.
> [He places the Helmet on Cuchulain's head.]
> And I choose the laughing lip
> That shall not turn from laughing, whatever rise or fall;
> The heart that grows no bitterer although betrayed by all;
> The hand that loves to scatter; the life like a gambler's throw;
> And these things I make prosper, till a day come that I know,
> When heart and mind shall darken that the weak may end the strong,
> And the long-remembering harpers have matter for their song.
> (Plays, 453)

Cuchulain's heart and mind darken when he kills his son in hand to hand combat. He turns, then, either in madness or under a Druid enchantment, to fight "the ungovernable sea" (Poems, 630) which seems to have been transformed before his eyes, in one version of the story, into "horses of the sea" (Poems, 111), and, in another, into the man he blames for the death of his son: King Conchubar.[115] This battle is the epitome of man's heroic struggle with the forces of change, of his aspiration to achieve mastery over them and hence enter into the changeless.

Although the victory appears to go to the waves,[116] it actually falls to Cuchulain, for through his extravagant heroism, he transcends the changing world of death and enters into the eternal. He himself observes that even before his epic battle he participates in the immutable, for the years have not "put water in [his] blood/And drowned the wildness of it, for all's changed,/ But that unchanged" (Plays, 493).

Cuchulain achieves immortality because through his wild excess he provides the long-remembering harpers with matter for their song. After all, Yeats tells us,

> Art delights in the exception, for it delights in the soul expressing itself according to its own laws and arranging the world about it in its own pattern, as sand strewn upon a drum will change itself into different patterns, according to the notes of music that are sung or played to it.[117]

It is not, of course, just the heroic soul that arranges the world in its own pattern. This metamorphic power belongs also to the artist who, "transfiguring words and sounds and events,"[118] shapes the things of this world in beauty, giving to them a value they would not otherwise have. In The King's Threshold, Seanchan instructs the Chamberlain,

> Well, if you are a poet,
> Cry out that the King's money would not buy,
> Nor the high circle consecrate his head,
> If poets had never christened gold, and even
> The moon's poor daughter, that most whey-faced metal,
> Precious; cry out that not a man alive
> Would ride among the arrows with high heart,
> Or scatter with an open hand, had not
> Our heady craft commended wasteful virtues. (Plays, 289-90)

The poet is able to accomplish his transformations because he possesses a "shaping joy" which, since

> it must be always making and mastering, remains in the hands and in the tongue of the artist, but with his eyes he enters upon a submissive, sorrowful contemplation of the great irremediable things, and he is known from other men by making all he handles like himself, and yet by the unlikeness to himself of all that comes before him in a pure contemplation.[119]

What he contemplates is the permanence of Tír-na-n-Og. With Seanchan he can say, "I have heard/Murmurs that are the ending of all sound./ I am out of life" (Plays, 287).

The First Cripple in The King's Threshold recognizes that "Those that make rhymes have a power from beyond the world" (Plays, 270) because the forces of the absolute, the faeries, maintain a special relationship with those on earth who share their love of beauty and the arts. Thus the poets Oisin, Fergus, Aleel, and Forgael all are given preferential treatment by the faeries, who are, in a sense, simply returning a favour, for if it is "Fable, who changes mortalities to immortalities in her cauldron,"[120] it is the poet who, by creating beauty, by recording and promulgating legend, and "Building a sorrowful loveliness/Out of the battles of old times" (Poems, 158), assures immortality to the old gods, to the heroes and the lovers.[121] As Oisin tells St. Patrick, "the tale, though words be lighter than air,/Must live to be old like the wandering moon" (Poems, 3).

The idea is not new, of course, but Yeats felt it important. One of the few items from The Island of Statues that he thought significant enough to reprint in the definitive edition of his poetry is the epilogue which he retitled "The Song of the Happy Shepherd" and placed first in "Crossways." In this lyric, aware that "The woods of

Arcady are dead,/And over is their antique joy," Yeats sets up an opposition between "the many changing things" that whirl past "To the cracked tune that Chronos sings," and the one power that endures: "Words alone are certain good" (Poems, 64, 65). "The kings of the old time are dead" but something has been preserved:

> An idle word is now their glory,
> By the stammering schoolboy said,
> Reading some entangled story. (Poems, 65)

Indeed,

> The wandering earth herself may be
> Only a sudden flaming word,
> In clanging space a moment heard,
> Troubling the endless reverie. (Poems, 65)

In Yeats the Man and the Masks, Ellmann discusses this poem. He feels it "reveals a curious irresolution," for, after establishing a dichotomy between two truths, the "grey truth" of the external world and the "certain good" of words and the subjective in "thine own heart," Yeats's argument becomes "puzzling," Ellmann believes, when it suggests that even the world may be only a word:

> But if the world is a word, then the "dusty deeds" which the poet has until now disparaged partake of the nature of the word as much as dreams do. In short, if everything is but words, then the statement that "words alone are certain good" becomes meaningless.[122]

Ellmann himself points out that what Yeats is concerned with here is the innate creative power and the reification of the word, but Ellmann feels Yeats was not able to cope with the implications of his own thought:

> Yeats suggests that words are not merely the signs of things, but things themselves, the stuff from which the universe is made. The animals did not exist until Adam gave them names. Such a position was too daring for the

> young poet, so he retreats in the rest of the poem to the land of the lotus-eaters, holding that poetry and dreaming are very pleasant sedatives.[123]

Yeats's position is, nonetheless, in keeping with symbolist and occult doctrines; it is a position which we shall see Yeats does not abandon, but develops at some length in works like "Rosa Alchemica."[124]

It is no wonder that the priest is but the shadow of the poet,[125] for the poet has as his gift all the powers associated with the domain of the faeries: this must be so, since poetry consists of "the words that have gathered up the heart's desire of the world"[126] and Tír-na-n-Og is "the land of heart's desire." What the poet does is give us glimpses of Tír-na-n-Og, by opening our eyes to the fact that, if this world is the correspondence of the other, in effect, Tír-na-n-Og lies all around us:

> The end of art is the ecstasy awakened by the presence before an ever-changing mind of what is permanent in the world, or by the arousing of that mind itself into the very delicate and fastidious mood habitual with it when it is seeking those permanent and recurring things.[127]

This passage from Discoveries (published first in 1906)[128] is a reshaping of one that appeared in Samhain in 1904:

> is it not that delight in beauty which tells the artist that he has imagined what may never die, itself but a delight in the permanent yet ever-changing form of life, in her very limbs and lineaments?[129]

These passages should remind us that while the power of metamorphosis belongs, paradoxically, to the changeless realm of the transcendent, transformation occurs frequently when this changing world we live in collides with the changeless and man is transported suddenly from one to the other. Bringing the worlds into collision and effecting the transportation is the business of the artist.[130]

In the following passage from Discoveries entitled "In the Serpent's Mouth," we see Yeats wrestling with this paradox and its relation to art:

> If it be true that God is a circle whose centre is everywhere, the saint goes to the centre, the poet and artist to the ring where everything comes round again. The poet must not seek for what is still and fixed, for that has no life for him; and if he did, his style would become cold and monotonous, and his sense of beauty faint and sickly, . . . but be content to find his pleasure in all that is for ever passing away that it may come again, in the beauty of woman, in the fragile flowers of spring, in momentary heroic passion, in whatever is most fleeting, most impassioned, as it were, for its own perfection, most eager to return in its glory. Yet perhaps he must endure the impermanent a little, for these things return, but not wholly, for no two faces are alike, and, it may be, had we more learned eyes, no two flowers. Is it that all things are made by the struggle of the individual and the world, of the unchanging and the returning, and that the saint and the poet are over all, and that the poet has made his home in the serpent's mouth?[131]

Although he has access to the centre, to Tír-na-n-Og, and thirsts after it continually, the poet must remain in touch with the material world, in the mouth of the Uroboros, simply because it is his task to provide a vehicle for those who do not have their own transportation to Tír-na-n-Og, since they do not belong to one of the elite groups standing in special relationship to the absolute. The poet's stories enchant; his rhythms entrance, prolonging "the moment of contemplation, the moment when we are both asleep and awake, which is the one moment of creation";[132] his images and symbols "call down among us certain disembodied powers, whose footsteps over our hearts we call emotions."[133] We enter Tír-na-n-Og through the gateway of beauty the poet/enchanter opens for us, for he is a Janus, like Villiers's character by this name, a keeper of the doors to the beyond.[134]

The poet knows the road to Tír-na-n-Og because he has special guides from that country. The Leanhaun Shee or faery mistress is, Yeats tells us, "the Gaelic muse."[135] She is a stern mistress, for she enslaves those who love her, but in return, like Oisin's Niamh, "she gives inspiration to those she persecutes,"[136] and when they die, she takes them with her to Tír-na-n-Og where they exchange their mortality for deathless beauty.

In "The Grey Rock" we see just such a transformation. Here, in a contrapuntal structure like that employed in "Baile and Aillinn" and "The Old Age of Queen Maeve," Yeats sets out "an old story [he's] remade" (Poems, 270),[137] a tale of ancient Celtic times interwoven with a modern commentary and parallel.

The body of the poem tells of divine "Rock-nurtured" Aoife's desire for revenge when her human lover prefers mortal friendship and a glorious death in earthly battle to near immortality with her: "He claimed his country's need was most" (Poems, 274, 275). The modern parallel is also an old story Yeats has remade, for it is the ancient tale rewritten with a new ending. The unfaithful lover who betrays Aoife "to his grave" (Poems, 275) is replaced by the poets of the Rhymers' Club, Yeats's "Companions of the Cheshire Cheese" (Poems, 270). They too are beloved of Aoife; she was their Leanhaun Shee, for they pursued ideal beauty. Unlike the ancient Celtic hero, however, the "Poets with whom [Yeats] learned [his] trade" (Poems, 270) remained faithful to their faery mistress all through their brief lives. Yeats speaks directly to them:

> [You] never made a poorer song
> That you might have a heavier purse,
> Nor gave loud service to a cause
> That you might have a troop of friends.
> You kept the Muses' sterner laws,
> And unrepenting faced your ends. (Poems, 273)

As reward, they have "earned the right"

> To troop with those the world's forgot,
> And copy their proud steady gaze. (Poems, 273)

They have been transported to Tír-na-n-Og where, in the company of the Ever-living, their "images have stood,/Mere bone and muscle thrown aside" (Poems, 273). The vehicle of their transformation is Yeats's poetry; he has inscribed their names in the book of the immortals: "Dowson and Johnson most I praise" (Poems, 273). Although Aoife's ancient Celtic lover has achieved a certain fame because of his heroism and his relationship with her, his immortality is incomplete: the poem does not record his name.

Aengus is another of the faery guides who lead the poet out of this world. In The Countess Cathleen, he appears to Aleel in a dream, walking in fire with "birds about his head." Aleel explains, to Cathleen:

> he bids me call you from these woods.
> And you must bring but your old foster-mother,
> And some few serving-men, and live in the hills,
> Among the sounds of music and the light
> Of waters, till the evil days are done. (Plays, 83)[138]

When he does not appear in person to guide the poet, Aengus may send his fool, as he does in The Shadowy Waters.

Women also stand in special relationship to the world of faery. They are intermediaries between man and the divine, in part for obvious physical reasons, and in part because of their emotional and intellectual makeup. Dillon and Chadwick write about the important place of women in Irish history and mythology. It was women who communicated wisdom, gave the heroes practical military training, and assumed a very particular spiritual function:

> The spiritual rôle assigned to women in [the] cult of rebirth is a lofty one. In this phase of Irish mythology the woman, not the man, is the spiritual vehicle who conveys the soul of the dead to rebirth in a later generation. Indeed it may be said that speaking generally the high prestige of women is a feature characteristic of early Celtic civilization and especially of Celtic mythology.[139]

The fickleness of woman is a cliché to which Yeats gives a new life in On Baile's Strand. Conchubar insists that before he and Cuchulain can exchange oaths, the house must be made fast against witches and the Sidhe:

> The holders of the fire
> Shall purify the thresholds of the house
> With waving fire, and shut the outer door,
> According to the custom; and sing rhyme
> That has come down from the old law-makers
> To blow the witches out. Considering
> That the wild will of man could be oath-bound,
> But that a woman's could not, they bid us sing
> Against the will of woman at its wildest
> In the Shape-Changers that run upon the wind.
> (Plays, 493, 495)

Paradoxically, it is the women of the household who make the incantation against inconstancy personified by

> The women none can kiss and thrive,
> For they are but whirling wind,
> Out of memory and mind. (Plays, 495)

Mortal women are able to approach the beyond more easily than ordinary men are because the self which, we have seen, "is broken in pieces by foolishness, . . . is forgotten in the sudden emotions of women."[140] They are able, therefore, to arrive at an intuitive understanding of reality and the ideal, against which man's rational mind raises barriers.[141] It is not surprising, then, to find that the far-off land governed by women, great Aoife's Scotland, is a mysterious country "full of wonders" that catch Fintain's imagination in _On Baile's Strand_. His description reminds us rather of Tír-na-n-Og:

> There are a great many Queens there who can change themselves into wolves and into swine and into white hares, and when they are in their own shapes they are stronger than almost any man; and there are young men there who have cat's eyes and if a bird chirrup or a mouse squeak they cannot keep them shut even though it is bedtime and they sleepy; and listen, for this is a great wonder, a very great wonder, there is a long narrow bridge, and when anybody goes to cross it, that the Queens do not like, it flies up as this bench would if you were to sit on the end of it. Everybody who goes there to learn skill in arms has to cross it. It was in that country too that Cuchulain got his spear made out of dragon bones. (_Plays_, 468)[142]

Cuchulain survived in Aoife's land because he was a hero and he "got the mastery over" the warrior queen (_Plays_, 471); but Almintor in _The Island of Statues_ is not a hero, he has no special standing with the beyond, and therefore needs the intercession of a woman to awaken him from his stony sleep. Naschina comes to his rescue and is successful because, like Villiers's Sara, she has a predestined part to play, she is that "shepherdess long years foretold" (_Plays_, 1247).

Naschina's role in _The Island of Statues_ is typical of woman's role throughout Yeats's work and similar to many of the images and symbols associated with transformation: like Sara and the rose in _Axël_, like the goblin flower in _The Island of Statues_, like metamorphosis itself, Naschina is an ambivalent force representing both positive and negative values. On the one hand, like the goblin flower, she is a source of temptation, leading Almintor astray into danger and causing his loss of control, his powerlessness as a consequence of degenerative metamorphosis; and yet Naschina is also the necessary means of Almintor's redemption and the vehicle of his regenerative transformation, his return to self-control.

In her duality, Naschina resembles Tír-na-n-Og itself. Although Yeats presents it as a symbol of the ideal, from the time of his earliest works he displays an ambivalent attitude towards Tír-na-n-Og and other images of transcendence. Indeed, we find in Yeats a hesitation between two worlds, an almost simultaneous attraction and repulsion that is not present in Villiers's work. It is for this reason that Marilyn Gaddis Rose feels "Axël could not have changed the direction of Yeats's work. Although Yeats was always fascinated by the Beyond, he was at the same time always aware that there were joys to be found only in daily living," joys like those enumerated in the final stanza of "The Stolen Child."[143] "Villiers' work, on the other hand, consistently disparages life, altogether intolerable if not lived in seclusion and cushioned in luxury."[144] This is perhaps an over-simplification, but there is truth to it.

In fact, Yeats sees definite dangers to transcendence: the faery queen in "Regina, Regina Pigmeorum, Veni" did, after all, warn him, "Be careful, and do not seek to know too much about us."[145] Those who do not heed her warning, who go in search of the goblin flower or the fruit of the Danaan quicken tree (Poems, 742-43) may find themselves caught up, like Wandering Aengus or He Who Mourns for the Change that has come upon Him and his Beloved, in what Sister M. Bernetta Quinn characterizes as "the heartbreaking and endless pursuit of the ideal."[146] The result for some may be the longing not only for death, but for the Armageddon symbolized by the boar without bristles. This secondary desire, like the one that fostered it, can be quenched only by the ultimate destruction of "Time and Birth and Change" (Poems, 153), for it represents the longing to escape from the Uroboros's "ring where everything comes round again," to free oneself from maya's web and move to the centre of the circle that is God, the absolute.[147] Those held in the thrall of such desires will be unable to function in normal life, for as Niamh explains in "The Hosting of the Sidhe,"

> if any gaze on our rushing band,
> We come between him and the deed of his hand,
> We come between him and the hope of his heart. (Poems, 141)

Their quest for the ideal has totally incapacitated the Sleepers in The Island of Statues.

In their simulated death, the Sleepers have at least been transfixed into a form that gives them a certain peace, and since they have become statues, they possess some of the positive features of works of art. In another instance of metamorphosis, however, Yeats presents a much more disturbing image of the transformation that may result from the search for the ideal. In "The Eaters of Precious Stones," he describes a waking dream in which he sees artists who have been hideously changed into apes:

> One day I saw faintly an immense pit of blackness, round which went a circular parapet, and on this parapet sat innumerable apes eating precious stones out of the palms

> of their hands. The stones glittered green and crimson, and the apes devoured them with an insatiable hunger. I knew that I saw my own Hell there, the Hell of the artist, and that all who sought after beautiful and wonderful things with too avid a thirst, lost peace and form and became shapeless and common.[148]

We find in the Leanhaun Shee a less repulsive image of the fate of the artist who is too devoted to Tír-na-n-Og. Those who love a faery mistress, who become slave to the Gaelic muse, "waste away, for she lives on their life."[149] They die young, because "she is restless, and will not let them remain long on earth--this malignant phantom."[150] In works like "The Grey Rock" and "The Tragic Generation," Yeats records the toll exacted by the Leanhaun Shee from the "Poets with whom [he] learned his trade" (Poems, 270) at the turn of the century. When they renounced normal life to pursue ideal beauty, "'Twas wine or women, or some curse" (Poems, 273) that brought them to an early death. They were all, Grossman writes, "victims of the lethal pathos of aestheticism."[151]

It is not, of course, just poets for whom pursuit of the ideal may lead to death. Like Mary Bruin and O'Driscoll's bride in the early version of "The Host of the Air," women who are "taken" by the Sidhe to the Land of Heart's Desire die. In their place remains "a drift of leaves,/Or bole of an ash-tree changed into [their] image" (Plays, 210).[152]

Yeats agrees with Villiers that transcendence must be purchased at the cost of renouncing this world. To a certain extent, he believes like Villiers "in the sacrifice of the present for the sake of the ideal future."[153] The problem is, of course, that the future may not always hold what one wants or expects. When, after "three score years of dream-led wandering," the Knight in The Seeker arrives in "the long-lost forest of the sprite" whose voice had called him "Through miseries unhuman ever on/To joys unhuman" (Plays, 1260, 1262) he finds only the bearded witch, Infamy, and death. There is always the danger that what calls from beyond is not divine, but demonic, or, at the very least, a dark force.[154] We should remember that the faeries have, after all, become the "dim folk," "children of the twilight," and are no longer the forces of full light. This change in itself is an expression of some doubt about their nature.

The hesitation concerning transcendence in Yeats's Celtic material is perhaps owing in some measure to the indefiniteness of the ideal represented by Tír-na-n-Og and to Yeats's habit of quiet syncretism. Much as the thought of the limitless, of unrestricted freedom and omnipotence, may on one level attract man, the indeterminate and its sister, the unknown, nonetheless hold a certain terror for him, as in consequence does the awesome thought of divinity.[155] The lack of definition associated with the twilight zone of Tír-na-n-Og springs in part from Irish tradition, and in part from Yeats's own eclecticism.[156] I mentioned earlier that he treats the faeries sometimes as elemental powers, sometimes as Tuatha De Danaan, and sometimes as the opposing forces of destruction, the Fomorians. We see the influence of the latter in the fascination with the final cataclysm, Aengus's "Druid dream of the end of days" (Poems, 16), and in the assignment of the faeries to wind, and sometimes water, for it was in these elements that, according to tradition, "the Fomorians took up residence after their defeat [by the Tuatha De Danaan] on the Towery Plain."[157] Thus we find in poems like "The Hosting of the Sidhe," "The Everlasting Voices," and "The Unappeasable Host" a mixture of fear and delight with the "sweet everlasting Voices" that call in the "Desolate winds that cry over the wandering sea" (Poems, 141, 147).[158]

Displaying what the editors of Druid Craft term "his own 'Danaan' view of the great battle" of Moytura (the Towery Plain),[159] Yeats explains its significance. He compares it to three other battles--the battle of the Valley of the Black Pig alluded to in the poem by the same name, the battle fought by the Sidhe "when a person is being taken away by them," and the "battle they are said to fight in November for the harvest":

> I suggest that the battle between the Tribes of the goddess Danu, the powers of light, and warmth, and fruitfulness, and goodness, and the Fomor, the powers of darkness, and cold, and barrenness, and badness upon the Towery Plain, was the establishment of the habitable world, the rout of the ancestral darkness; that the battle among the Sidhe for the harvest is the annual battle of summer and winter; that the battle among the Sidhe at a man's death is the battle of life and death; and that the battle of the Black Pig is the battle between the manifest world and the ancestral darkness at the end of all things; and that all these battles are one, the battle of all things with shadowy decay. (Poems, 810)[160]

If the opposing forces are confounded, or if there is a "possibility that the Danaan light is a false light and that Danaan fruitfulness compounds delusion"[161] by tying man to the eternally rotating wheel of cyclic return, putting him back into the crucible, or onto the anvil of life, then it is no wonder that Yeats's Celtic works hesitate between this world and the beyond.

The hesitation gives support to the suggestion made earlier that Tír-na-n-Og, on occasion at least, represents only a transitional stage on the path to complete transcendence. In The Golden Dawn, Regardie describes a phase of initiation marked by doubts and the "realisation . . . that 'all is sorrow'."[162] He describes this as "the solve half of the alchemical solve et coagula formula."[163] In Axël we saw the initiate hesitate about transcendence, temporarily reject it, and consequently descend into the profane.[164]

Like Naschina, the Seeker, Fergus, and the speaker of "He thinks of his Past Greatness when a Part of the Constellations of Heaven," many of Yeats's characters who penetrate the mystery of the beyond and thus acquire special knowledge of it, learn there is great sorrow in supernatural wisdom. For one thing, omniscience takes the surprise, the human joy, out of life. The disappearance of Naschina's shadow is a graphic indication that, like Fergus and the others with divine knowledge, she has "grown nothing, knowing all" (Poems, 104).

Oisin's experience with Tír-na-n-Og is also a rather unhappy one because, as Yeats explains in "The Circus Animals' Desertion" years after he first published the narrative poem about the Fenian poet's wanderings, Oisin was

> led by the nose
> Through three enchanted islands, allegorical dreams,
> Vain gaiety, vain battle, vain repose,
> Themes of the embittered heart. . . . (Poems, 629)

Life on the three faery islands is vain because, Oisin discovers, although the sorrows of earthly life disappear when one transcends this world, unfortunately, the human element is also lost. This missing component is what makes Oisin restless in Tír-na-n-Og, what drives him on from island to island seeking a satisfaction that cannot be found. In each new faery realm he seems divinely happy until some small token from the world of man--a broken lance with blood stains, a beech-bough, an exhausted starling--appears to remind him of his absent comrades and reawaken in his bosom "the ancient sadness of man" (Poems, 54). And so he returns to catch just a glimpse of his old friends, deserted by him three hundred years earlier; but because, like Naschina, he has a special fate, a role in history predetermined, "Loosed long ago from Heaven's gate" (Poems, 24), he is caught up again in the web of human life. Unfortunately, his friends have all passed away, and with them the old glory and powers. The world is no longer as Oisin remembers it; his interference in the new world in an attempt to re-establish the ancient glory is doomed to failure.

With his fall to earth at the end of the poem, Oisin is transformed into the consummate image of the nostalgic old man who refuses to accept the changes wrought by time. "A creeping old man, full of sleep, with the spittle on his beard never dry" (Poems, 60), he decides that neither his experience in the pagan Isles of the Blest, nor the promise of a Christian heaven is compensation enough for being deprived of the companionship of his heroic comrades.[165] Caught between two worlds, he rejects both and determines to "dwell in the house of the Fenians, be they in flames or at feast" (Poems, 63). Oisin has learned that he does not belong in the domain of the absolute, whatever shape it may take; he must live in the world that is proper to his own nature. His wisdom has been bought at great cost.[166]

Between Two Worlds: The Transitional Works

Yeats's interest in the Celtic materials that he incorporated into his work sprang in part from nationalism and in part from his belief in the primacy of the folk as a source of true wisdom and hence of a natural art that prepares the way for the more sophisticated work of the individual artist.

> Folk-art is, indeed, the oldest of the aristocracies of thought, and because it refuses what is passing and trivial, the merely clever and pretty, as certainly as the vulgar and insincere, and because it has gathered into itself the simplest and most unforgettable thoughts of the generations, it is the soil where all great art is rooted. Wherever it is spoken by the fireside, or sung by the roadside, or carved upon the lintel, appreciation of the arts that a single mind gives unity and design to, spreads quickly when its hour is come.[167]

This passage implicitly links the three groups which are always associated in Yeats's work because they possess strong and stable traditions built on self-assurance, delight in the beautiful for its own sake, and an innate scorn for the common, whatever its guise. In "Poetry and Tradition" Yeats makes the relationship explicit:

> Three types of men have made all beautiful things. Aristocracies have made beautiful manners, because their place in the world puts them above the fear of life, and the countrymen have made beautiful stories and beliefs, because they have nothing to lose and so do not fear, and the artists have made all the rest, because Providence has filled them with recklessness.[168]

Although at different times in his career Yeats fell under influences which convinced him to shape his work to specific ends outside art itself, he always experienced doubts about the validity of doing so. In "What is 'Popular Poetry?'" he wrote, "in my heart of hearts I have never been quite certain that one should be more than an artist, that even patriotism is more than an impure desire in an artist."[169]

Years later, in "The Man and the Echo," Yeats admitted that some of his works had been contaminated by politics, and he wondered if they had not perhaps been the cause of evil:

> I lie awake night after night
> And never get the answers right.
> Did that play of mine send out
> Certain men the English shot?
> Did words of mine put too great strain
> On that woman's reeling brain? (Poems, 632)

Yeats never abandoned his Irish material, because he felt the best art was a result of the wedding of "lunar" folk elements with "solar" aspects "that came from the high disciplined or individual kingly mind."[170] His "great aim," Robert O'Driscoll notes,

> was to bridge the written and unwritten traditions, to establish a learned literary tradition on emotions that came from the heart of the people, and so create from the shock of new material and from a tradition that had never found expression in sophisticated literature a new style, a new mood of the soul.[171]

In the dedication to the 1897 edition of The Secret Rose, Yeats states that he will not write the type of "really national poem or romance" that his Irish friends sometimes request:

> by a national poem or romance I understand them to mean a poem or romance founded upon some moment of famous Irish history, and built up out of the thoughts and feelings which move the greater number of patriotic Irishmen. I on the other hand believe that poetry and romance cannot be made by the most conscientious study of famous moments and of the thoughts and feelings of others, but only by looking into that little, infinite, faltering, eternal flame that one calls one's self. If a writer wishes to interest a certain people among whom he has grown up, or fancies he has a duty towards them, he may choose for the symbols of

> his art their legends, their history, their beliefs, their opinions, because he has a right to choose among things less than himself, but he cannot choose among the substances of art.[172]

Yeats goes on to point out, however, that despite what he has said, The Secret Rose is inherently Irish:

> So far . . . as this book is visionary it is Irish; for Ireland, which is still predominantly Celtic, has preserved with some less excellent things a gift of vision, which has died out among more hurried and more successful nations: no shining candelabra have prevented us from looking into the darkness, and when one looks into the darkness, there is always something there.[173]

We have already seen that as early as the publication of Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry in 1888, Yeats associated his Celtic researches with his interest in the occult. The latter is never far below the surface of Yeats's work but in The Secret Rose the two traditions are closely integrated.[174] Although in most of the stories in the volume Yeats draws his symbols from Irish sources, he uses little received mythology. Instead he constructs his own legends. The "substance" of his art here is "the sorrows and ecstasies" of those who engage in the struggle which Yeats tells A.E. is the single subject of the book: "the war of spiritual with natural order."[175] As we might expect, because one of the two epigrams is Yeats's favourite quotation from Villiers, "As for living, our servants will do that for us," although the natural order, the "servants," are present in the stories, it is the spiritual order that takes precedence, demanding sacrifice and renunciation in return for transcendence.

Finneran summarizes the conflict between the two orders as it is seen in the eight stories to which the title The Secret Rose is restricted in Mythologies:

> For Yeats, the "natural order" meant the world of common reality, variously imaged in the stories as the world of kings and courts, of violent soldiers, of cottage life, and, most importantly, of Christianity. By "spiritual order" Yeats meant any attempt to transcend this common reality and attain some form of higher wisdom or beauty; this order is variously imaged in the figures of Aengus, of a king touched by the Sidhe, of a quasi-Rosicrucian knight, and of several scholars and poets. The basic pattern of the conflict between the two orders is identical in almost all the stories: the spiritual hero is misunderstood, rejected, and destroyed by the natural order. But often enough, the process of literal death results in a symbolic victory, a transcendence of the natural and an elevation to the spiritual.[176]

The pattern of conflict Finneran describes is perhaps a little too neat. Robert O'Driscoll points out:

> The pattern of The Secret Rose is not simple. It is not merely a matter of bard against monk, of pagan against Christian, or energy against repression. Where Yeats had emphasized the fierce oppression of the monks in "The Crucifixion of the Outcast," he emphasizes their piety in "The Curse of the Fires and the Shadows" and their capacity for ecstasy in "Where there is Nothing, there is God." The dedicated Knight in "Out of the Rose" defends the prayerful old man and destroys the sacrilegious plunderers, while the old man in "The Old Men of the Twilight," although detached from the world and dedicated to his rosary, preserves his passion for possession and plunder, and is consequently denied the contact with the supernatural which is offered him. In "The Curse of the Fires and the Shadows" the supernatural intervenes to destroy those who plunder for mere material reward: "Woe unto all who have struck down those who have lived in the Light of the Lord," the dying abbot proclaims, "for they shall wander among shadows and among fires!"[177]

Victorious as he may in the end be, the spiritual hero does die in many of the stories in The Secret Rose. I do not believe, however, that his destruction represents even a temporary triumph of the natural order. It is more accurate to see the hero of these stories as the victim of the sacrifice claimed by the transcendent, for a number of the stories illustrate the dangers we have already seen are inherent in the quest for the ideal. In a sense, the story which replaced "The Binding of the Hair" at the beginning of the collection serves as an image for what follows it: the "crucifixion" of the outcast is a recurring theme.[178]

As we might expect, metamorphosis plays a role in several of the stories, sometimes as a symbol of triumph, sometimes of defeat. "The Heart of the Spring," for instance, closes with a thrush singing. We are not told so directly, but the story implies that the thrush is the transformation of the old man who has spent his lifetime seeking transcendence in the one moment "which trembles with the Song of the Immortal Powers."[179] Although his young assistant recognizes only that the old man has died and believes, therefore, that he must have failed in his quest, clearly he has heard the Song of the Immortal Powers and has begun his journey "into the eternal kingdom of [his] youth."[180]

The old man in this story is a student of occult sciences who has dedicated his life to spiritual transformation and has been suitably rewarded.[181] In "The Old Men of the Twilight" Yeats presents a counter-image of scholars who, having devoted themselves to fruitless pedantry, receive appropriate punishment through metamorphosis.[182] "Generations ago" the old men of the twilight had removed themselves from what they saw as the boring realities of both earthly and spiritual life: "we neither hunted, nor went to battle, nor said prayers, nor sang songs, nor made love."[183] While the old pagan religion and the new Christianity struggled for supremacy all round them, they ignored both sides, turning instead to dispute "concerning prosody and the relative importance of rhyme and assonance, syllable and accent."[184] They had become images of mediocrity.[185] For this, "the Druid Patrick" condemned them to be transformed into herons:

> Because you have lived where the feet of the angels cannot touch your heads, nor the hair of the demons sweep your feet-soles, I shall make you an example for ever and ever; you shall become grey herons and stand pondering in grey pools and flit over the world in that hour when it is most full of sighs; and your deaths shall come by chance and unforeseen, for you shall not be certain about anything for ever and ever.[186]

Commitment, whether to the cause of the old or the new religion, would have been preferable, for the absolute, the ultimate in excess, approves only the fire of extravagance.

The situation in "The Old Men of the Twilight" recalls Yeats's description in "To Some I have Talked with by the Fire" of

> the wayward twilight companies
> Who sigh with mingled sorrow and content,
> Because their blossoming dreams have never bent
> Under the fruit of evil and of good. (Poems, 136-37)

In the poem, the "twilight companies" stand midway between the demonic "dark folk" and the angelic "embattled flaming multitude." The poem appeared in The Bookman in May 1895, just months before the first publication of the short story. Yeats was obviously concerned at this time with the ambivalent role of twilight as a transitional state that contains within it features potentially both positive and negative.

In "The Wisdom of the King" metamorphosis is an image of the mixed blessings that come with special relationships to the transcendent. When the women of the Sidhe, the crones of the grey hawk, "touch" the son of the High King of Ireland, transforming his red heart to grey, his nurse's prayer is granted and he is given "wisdom equal to his beauty."[187] Unfortunately, the favour of the immortals is marked not only by the internal changes, but also by a visible physical sign of the child's election: hawk feathers grow in his hair. As a result, the people are unable to "separate from their admiration of the wisdom" that grows in him "a horror as at one of unhuman blood."[188] Nevertheless, they want him to rule, and so, when his father dies, the young king's counsellors determine to disobey "an ancient law of Ireland" that none who has "any blemish of body" can sit upon the throne.[189] Because they fear he would feel obliged to obey the law and abdicate, they manage to hide the king's deformity from him for a time and he reigns with great but too subtle wisdom: the wisdom of the immortals is not meant for man to live by, "for it and the hail and the rain and the thunder follow a way that is deadly to mortal things."[190] The country begins to suffer as, under the king's influence, the people remember "certain strange words" that make "ordinary joys nothing," seek "impossible joys," and grow unhappy.[191]

Just as it was woman (represented by the nurse and the crones) who brought the land into its predicament, so it is woman (represented by "the daughter of a little king" who lives a great way off) who eventually redeems it.[192] The wise king falls in love with her, for she is "beautiful, with a beauty unlike that of other women"; but her heart is like that of other women, and when she thinks of "the mystery of the hawk feathers" she is afraid.[193] Like the king's subjects, she is torn between her fear and admiration, she is ever "between a smile and a frown; between yielding and withholding."[194] When her heart triumphs over her beauty and she turns to a mortal man for love, the king discovers the truth about his transgression of the old law. After reprimanding his counsellors for making him "sin against the laws [and] . . . against the secrecy of wisdom," he sets out "to find [his] kindred."[195] Like Oisin, the king recognizes that he belongs in the world appropriate to his nature. Since the mortal and the immortal cannot co-exist on this earth, no one sees him again or hears his voice.[196]

With the possible exception of "The Wisdom of the King," all the stories of The Secret Rose involve times of transition when an old order in the process of transformation stands in conflict with a new.[197] We have seen this pattern in "The Old Men of the Twilight." It is implicit also in "The Heart of the Spring" where the old man seeks to "bring the gods and the Men of Faery to [his] side,"[198] while the young boy wears a rosary about his neck. The old man and his companion live in a building which stands as mute witness to the early sixteenth-century struggle between Catholic and Protestant: a little monastery burnt down "by sacrilegious men of the Queen's party."[199] "Proud Costello, MacDermot's Daughter, and the Bitter Tongue" is set at approximately the same time; "The Curse of the Fires and of the Shadows" slightly later, during the period of growing Puritan dominance.

Both "The Crucifixion of the Outcast" and "Where there is Nothing, there is God" take place in the early Irish Christian period. The representative of the old order, the outcast gleeman who knows "all the tricks of Aengus the Subtle-hearted" and has a soul "like the wind among the salley gardens," laments the coming of Christianity and curses "the soldier of Dathi who brought the tree of death out of barbarous lands."[200] It is the total disregard by the new order for the ancient and sacred laws of hospitality that draws the "bard's curse" down upon the abbot and leads to the crucifixion of the outcast.

Although "Out of the Rose" is set solidly in Christian times, the old Knight of St. John has been warned of the coming of a new era when rationalism and authoritarianism will replace individualism and spiritualism. Men will "turn from the light of their own hearts, and bow down before outer order and outer fixity," and then the light will cease, "and none escape the curse except the foolish good man" who cannot think, and "the passionate wicked man" who will not.[201]

The Sidhe wander in and out of the stories, always in support of the stability and permanence of the older order, whether this be pagan or (in the conflict between two forms of Christianity) Catholic. We have already seen their role in "The Wisdom of the King," "The Heart of the Spring," "The Old Men of the Twilight," and "Where there is Nothing, there is God" (in which Aengus has become a Christian monk). In "The Curse of the Fires and of the Shadows" the Sidhe triumph over a party of raiding Puritans who have violated the sanctuary of the Abbey of the White Friars at Sligo and desecrated the altar. By magical delusion and guile, the Sidhe lead the Puritans to their deaths at Lugnagall, the Steep Place of the Strangers.[202]

Music and poetry are associated in The Secret Rose with the spiritual order as they are in the other works at which we have looked. "The Old Men of the Twilight" is the one story in which we might say poetry is missing, for although music and song are mentioned, they occur only in the negative. When Patrick preaches, "the linnets and the wrens and the sparrows [still] their ever-trembling tongues."[203] Their silence is pregnant with awe before the word of God, but that of the old men of the twilight reflects the sterile emptiness of their pedantry: they ignore song as well as all other aspects of both physical and spiritual life. As a result they are denied transcendence, fixed for ever and ever in the twilight of uncertainty represented by their transformation into grey herons.

In all the other stories in The Secret Rose, the presence of music and poetry is felt to some degree or other. The Aengus of "Where there is Nothing, there is God," although he has been transformed into a lowly Christian beggar, retains his Danaan associations not only with wisdom and love, but also with joyous song: he works the Brothers' quern, nor is it "turned with grudging labour," for the beggar can be heard singing as he drives the handle round.[204] In "The Heart of the Spring" we have seen the old man's ascendence into eternal beauty, into "the Song of the Immortal Powers," figured in his metamorphosis into a singing thrush. Similarly, when the ancient Knight of St. John in "Out of the Rose" enters "into the Kingdom of God, which is in the Heart of the Rose," he dies with a Latin song upon his lips.[205] Art, the image of transcendence, is achieved here, as elsewhere in Yeats, through renunciation and sacrifice.

In "The Curse of the Fires and of the Shadows," the faery man who conducts the Puritans to their deaths lures them to him by means of bagpipe music and then, "singing in Gaelic," holds them in an enchantment until they plunge into the abyss.[206] Although the revenge of the old spiritual order upon the new is a positive element in this case, the shadow of destructiveness is nonetheless cast over music and poetry here, as it is in almost all the stories in The Secret Rose.

The shadow is perhaps darkest in "Proud Costello, MacDermot's Daughter, and the Bitter Tongue." It is the piper Duallach Daly who, serving as intermediary, brings news to Costello of the betrothal of his sweetheart to another man. Duallach thus initiates the action which leads to three deaths: his own, and those of Costello and his sweetheart, Una MacDermot. When events have not yet reached the point of no return, the piper goads Costello about his pride until the course of destruction becomes irreversible: although Una lies dying of a broken heart, Costello refuses to go to save her because he feels he has been slighted by her family. Costello realizes that Duallach is responsible for his troubles and kills him. When Una dies, Costello goes mad and, unable to recall her to him, threatens to leave her graveside, never to return. At this point, in the dawn twilight, Una appears in the midst of a faery ride-past and angrily slaps his face, crying, "Then go and never return."[207] His madness deepens and he swims to his death in the lake.

The piper, Duallach, has deserted the realm of pure art; in demanding money for his message, in bending his talents to ends outside his proper domain and interfering in the "real life" of the story, he has brought the devastating consequences that so worry the Man in "The Man and the Echo." The piper's role in the story is not totally negative, however. It is his duty as artist to lead man away from the humiliating and menial and to elevate him through pride to nobility. Despite the fatal consequences of his interference, Duallach fulfills his duty. As a result of his actions, like Yeats's other great lovers, Una and Costello are transformed into the beauty and eternity of legend and art. The conclusion of the story recalls the metamorphoses of such lovers as Baile and Aillinn, and Baucis and Philemon:

> And the peasants lamented over [Costello] and sang the keen, and laid him in the Abbey on Insula Trinitatis with only the ruined altar between him and MacDermot's daughter, and planted above them two ash-trees that in after days wove their branches together and mingled their leaves.[208]

Although he may have been the occasion of their deaths, Duallach has achieved for Costello and Una the transformation into art that Yeats effected for all the people of his works, whether real or fictitious.

The ambivalent attitude towards poetry found in "Proud Costello, MacDermot's Daughter, and the Bitter Tongue" is present also in "The Wisdom of the King" where it is combined with the conflicting feelings about transcendence and supernatural wisdom we noticed earlier. The women of the Sidhe who transform the young prince into one of them, by turning his red heart to grey, are attracted to the child partly because his heart sings "like a bird that is happy in a silver cage."[209] They celebrate his transformation by singing him a cradle song that suggests the ambivalent nature of their gift:

> their voices were now tender and caressing, now like the wind blowing in the great wood, and this was their song:--
>
> Out of sight is out of mind:
> Long have man and woman-kind,
> Heavy of will and light of mood,
> Taken away our wheaten food,
> Taken away our Altar-stone;
> Hail and rain and thunder alone,
> And red hearts we turn to grey,
> Are true till Time gutter away.[210]

The song is full of the isolation of election, "of the doom of loneliness which," the old man in "The Heart of the Spring" tells his young companion, "always falls upon the wise."[211]

When the child becomes king, poets as well as men of law are among the counsellors who decide to ignore the ancient taboo concerning the physical integrity of the king.[212] In fact, it is the chief poet who calls the counsellors together to weigh the matter. After discovering what they have done, the king reprimands both the men of law, for making him "sin against the laws," and the men of verse, for making him "sin against the secrecy of wisdom."[213] Because he thought he was among his own people, the king revealed to the masses what should have remained hidden from all but the elect who had been spiritually transformed as he had. Since they are among those in some measure privy to the secrets of the beyond, the poets ought to have known better and prevented the king from speaking the words that to the multitudes "seemed to make all darkness light and filled their hearts like music," but in the end only made their lives unhappy for "wisdom the gods have made, and no man shall live by its light."[214] Wisdom's immortal song, although it may transform the chosen few, is dangerous to the "servants" who must do the living for them.

The beyond is, of course, dangerous even for the elite, as Cumhal, the gleeman, discovers in "The Crucifixion of the Outcast." Because he is "heathen in his heart, always longing after [the old heroes and gods and] always making poems in praise of those kings and queens of the demons," the monks fear him and determine to put him to death.[215] Although they delight in his songs and stories, the monks are frightened by the feelings Cumhal's art arouses:

> the young monks were mad to hear him, but when he had ended they grew angry, and beat him for waking forgotten longings in their hearts. So they set the cross upon his back and hurried him to the hill.[216]

The gleeman recognizes the source of his problems:

> I heard in my heart the rustling of the rose-bordered dress of her who is more subtle than Aengus the Subtle-hearted, and more full of the beauty of laughter than Conan the Bald, and more full of the wisdom of tears than White-breasted Deirdre, and more lovely than a bursting dawn to them that are lost in the darkness.[217]

Cumhal's pursuit of "Eternal beauty wandering on her way" (Poems, 101) has brought him poverty, loneliness, and finally death. Yet because his tattered exterior masks a "towered city full of noble raiment" and because he has pursued beauty, Yeats has immortalized him, transforming him in death into that very beauty he sought unsuccessfully throughout life.[218]

The first edition of The Secret Rose in 1897 opened with a story which was not reprinted in subsequent volumes. This was "The Binding of the Hair," slightly revised from its prior publication in The Savoy (January 1896). Although he is not an outcast but lives in an earlier heroic age when poetry and the old order are still respected, the central character of the story, the poet Aodh, shares a fate much like that of Cumhal and Duallach. Aodh is a famous bard who, although "he would live now in the raths of kings, now alone in the great forest,"[219] at the moment is at the court of Queen Dectira. He is in love with Dectira, who is a mortal image of the same eternal beauty pursued by Cumhal and the voices of such poems as "To the Rose upon the Rood of Time" and "To Ireland in the Coming Times."[220]

Although he frequently sings songs of love, when an enemy attack is imminent Aodh sings of anger so that he may rouse Dectira's men-at-arms to action. Like Duallach, Aodh has rejected pure, disinterested art, at least temporarily, in favour of involving not only his poetry but himself in life: after promising to sing the Queen his love song no matter what the outcome of the battle, Aodh joins in the fight when it comes. As a consequence, he is among the many who are slain. Once more, however, the poet's sacrifice has not been in vain, for the victory goes to Dectira's men and when Aodh's severed head is found hanging from a bush, it is singing the promised song.

Despite the "utilitarian" songs of war, the poet has actually been faithful, both in life and in death, to his love, eternal beauty. The songs of anger were, after all, designed "to fill the hearts of [Dectira's] men-at-arms with thirst of battle that her days might have peace"; and over even the martial tales

> hovered a mournful beauty not of battle, and from time to time he would compare the gleam of a sword to the brightness of her eyes; or the dawn breaking on a morning of victory to the glimmering of her breast.[221]

The songs of anger were in effect, then, songs of love.

The song the severed head sings is, in O'Driscoll's words, a "delicate poem which has immortalized one mortal gesture"[222]--the binding of Dectira's hair. The song is also both a hymn to eternal beauty and a description of the metamorphic power of poetry:

> Fasten your hair with a golden pin,
>   And bind up every wandering tress;
>   I bade my heart build these poor rhymes:
> It worked at them, day out, day in,
>   Building a sorrowful loveliness
>   Out of the battles of old times.

You need but lift a pearl-pale hand,
  And bind up your long hair and sigh;
    And all men's hearts must burn and beat;
And candle-like foam on the dim sand,
  And stars climbing the dew-dropping sky,
    Live but to light your passing feet.[223]

O'Driscoll sums up the outcome of the story in this fashion:

> The massive armies prove powerless over matter, and must suffer the fate of all who serve material things; but the bard, by his mastery over mood and spirit, achieves immortality both for himself and for the beauty he has seen manifested.[224]

Within the confines of the story itself, Aodh is simply a mortal poet who aspires after transcendent beauty, symbolized by the young queen. But Aodh (or Aedh, as his name is generally spelled from 1899 on), appears in a number of other places in Yeats's works, including "The Wanderings of Oisin" as revised for Poems (1895), the first edition of The Wind Among the Reeds, and a note to each of these volumes.[225] When we examine Aodh in these other locations, we discover that he has several dimensions.

In Part II of "The Wanderings of Oisin," Niamh brings Oisin to rescue a maiden from the dusky shape-shifting demon. The maid tells them that their efforts will be in vain, for her captor is so powerful that not even the gods can help her,

> And [she] must needs endure and hate and weep,
> Until the gods and demons drop asleep,
> Hearing Aedh touch the mournful strings of gold. (Poems, 35)

Yeats's note to this passage tells us that Aedh is "A God of death. All who hear his harp playing die. He was one of the two gods who appeared to Cuhoollin before his death, according to the bardic tale" (Poems, 794). In later revisions, Yeats attributes the reference to

Standish O'Grady's History of Ireland rather than to "the bardic tale." Grossman quotes part of O'Grady's History in which Aedh is described:

> He carries a harp of pure gold; and against the melody of that harp they say that not even the gods themselves are secure, and it is said too that he is the strongest of the gods and in the end will slay them all, for he alone is really immortal, nor was he made so by eating of the herd of Mannanon, but he is immortal in his own right, and while things endure he will endure. And there is no singing so sweet as his and no music like the music of his harp, suggestive of things never seen or heard, beauty beyond all beauty, and nobleness to which the knighthood of earth may not be compared, and visions of love and bliss and of worlds fair and good.[226]

The Aedh that the maiden waits for in "The Wanderings of Oisin," then, is a combination of divine artist and grim reaper. He brings death not only on the personal and microcosmic level to individuals, but also on the macrocosmic and supernatural to the entire universe. He is the positive image of the final cataclysm of which the boar without bristles is the negative.[227] What the captive maiden is telling Niamh and Oisin is that she is doomed to remain in the demon's power until the end of time when Aedh will bring a beautiful peace to all with his fatal music.

When we take this information to our reading of "The Binding of the Hair," the mortal bard of the story becomes an incarnation of the divine poet and must be seen as totally responsible both for the deaths of the men he has roused to battle and for the peace that results when Dectira's forces defeat the nations of the People of the Bag. The three notes that Aodh struck, "as soft and sad as though they were the cooing of doves over the Gates of Death," are not just the introduction to his interrupted love song, nor simply a foreshadowing of what is to come, but the immediate and direct cause of the ensuing slaughter and subsequent tranquillity which follows from that "sleep older than the world."[228] The minute Aodh strikes the three notes, a messenger rushes in to announce that "The nations with ignoble bodies and ragged beards have driven us from the fires and have killed many!"[229]. Many more die in the battle that follows, including, as we have seen, Aodh himself. But as the incarnation of the one Irish god who "alone is really immortal," the divine artist whose music suggests the "beauty beyond all beauty," Aodh cannot be silenced: he still sings his ecstatic hymn to beauty.[230]

Aodh reappears two years later as Aedh in ten poems of The Wind Among the Reeds (1899).[231] Like the three other recurring personae in this volume--Mongan, Hanrahan, and Michael Robartes--Aedh's name appears only in the titles. It is interesting that, although Mongan was mentioned in the original title of one poem ("Song of Mongan"), all the other Mongan, Aedh, Hanrahan, and Michael Robartes poems were originally published under different titles which did not include their names; in subsequent editions the names were eliminated once again. It should be noted also that the name O'Sullivan the Red or O'Sullivan Rua is found in each list of original titles taken over by Michael Robartes, Hanrahan, and Aedh, and that the simple impersonal designations "He," "The Lover," and in one case, "The Poet" replace all four personae names (including Mongan) in the final titles.[232]

It is not surprising, therefore, to discover that, as Ellmann points out, in the poems of The Wind Among the Reeds, "the distinction between the characters is not perfect."[233]

Yeats does, however, discriminate between Aedh, Hanrahan, and Michael Robartes. In the note to The Wind Among the Reeds, "'Aedh,' [Aodh] 'Hanrahan' and 'Michael Robartes' in these Poems," Yeats tells us that

> These are personages in "The Secret Rose"; but, with the exception of some of Hanrahan's and one of Aedh's poems, the poems are not out of that book. I have used them in this book more as principles of the mind than as actual personages. It is probable that only students of the magical tradition will understand me when I say that "Michael Robartes" is fire reflected in water, and that Hanrahan is fire blown by the wind, and that Aedh, whose name is not merely the Irish form of Hugh, but the Irish for fire, is fire burning by itself. To put it in a different way, Hanrahan is the simplicity of an imagination too changeable to gather permanent possessions, or the adoration of the shepherds; and Michael Robartes is the pride of the imagination brooding upon the greatness of its possessions, or the adoration of the Magi; while Aedh is the myrrh and frankincense that the imagination offers continually before all that it loves. (Poems, 803)

As "fire burning by itself," Aedh unites the creative and destructive elements we have seen associated with the persona as divine artist and god of death. He resembles the alchemist's stone, the lapis described in the Rosarium philosophorum:

> "Lapis noster hic est ignis ex igne creatus et in ignem vertitur, et anima eius in igne moratur" (This our stone is fire, created of fire, and turns into fire; its soul dwells in fire).[234]

A passage in "Where there is Nothing, there is God" illustrates the unity of creative and destructive elements in a different context. They are linked with a stone in an interesting application to the theological sphere of Pater's aesthetic and ethical dictum: to attempt "to burn always with [a] hard gemlike flame, to maintain this ecstasy" is not only "success in life," it is to become divine.[235] Olioll inquires about the jewelled box that is to contain the great book:

> "Why has Brother Peter put a great ruby on the side of the box?"
> "The ruby is a symbol of the love of God."
> "Why is the ruby a symbol of the love of God?"
> "Because it is red, like fire, and fire burns up everything, and where there is nothing, there is God."[236]

Fire burns by itself where there is nothing: in the before and after of eternity. The principle of both beginnings and endings, Aedh is, like the alchemical Mercury, the cosmic Uroboros.[237] He is simultaneously the pure imagination and the product of that imagination, that which transforms and that which is transformed, the poet and his art.[238] As "the myrrh and frankincense that the imagination offers continually before all that it loves," Aedh is also the sacrifice that the poet must make in order to perfect his art. In alchemical terms he is the lapis as Christ: divine creator, divine created, divine sacrifice, divine redeemer, divine redeemed.[239] He tells us in "Aedh tells of the Rose in his Heart" how he seeks to transform the world, redeeming it from the evil of ugliness, and we are reminded that Christ sought to remake the world, saving it from the ugliness of evil.

It is not just the external world that Aedh wishes to re-form; as we see in the second stanza, he also desires to reshape himself:

> The wrong of unshapely things is a wrong too great to be
>   told;
> I hunger to build them anew and sit on a green knoll apart,

With the earth and the sky and the water, remade, like a
casket of gold
For my dreams of your image that blossoms a rose in the
deeps of my heart. (Poems, 143)

A few years later, in words that strongly suggest Aedh speaks for his creator, Yeats commented on his habit of revising old poems:

The friends that have it I do wrong
When ever I remake a song,
Should know what issue is at stake:
It is myself that I remake. (Poems, 778)[240]

For Yeats, as a lyric poet, artistic creation was an act of self-discovery. Like the alchemists who sought spiritual transformation through the symbolic process of transmuting base metals to gold, Yeats hoped to bring spiritual and psychological order to his life by aesthetic discipline, by the shaping and reshaping of songs that would end in "the heart's discovery of itself."[241]

Finneran feels that Yeats's art in The Secret Rose "is addressed not to the populace but to the initiate."[242] This statement is perhaps even more true of "Rosa Alchemica" and the group of stories that centre around Hanrahan than it is of the ones we have just examined. Six of the seventeen stories in the 1897 edition of The Secret Rose concern Hanrahan. With O'Sullivan the Red in place of Hanrahan, all six had appeared previously in periodicals, two in 1892, two in 1894, and two in 1896.[243] In Stories of Red Hanrahan (1905, finished and dated 1904) Yeats published rewritten versions of the last five stories, replacing the opening story, "The Book of the Great Dhoul and Hanrahan the Red," with "Red Hanrahan" which had first appeared in the Independent Review (December 1903).[244]

Although, like Aedh, Hanrahan is a poet, he belongs neither to Irish tradition, the divine order, nor to the distant heroic age. Based in part on the historical figures Owen O'Sullivan and William Dall O'Heffernan, Hanrahan is, nonetheless, Yeats's own creation: an all too human, eighteenth-century peasant poet, an "Old lecher with a love on every wind" (Poems, 413).[245] Hanrahan is also somewhat of a scholar who conducts a "hedge-school" for the local children, carries an inkpot round his neck and a copy of Virgil and a primer in his pocket.[246]

In "The Book of the Great Dhoul and Hanrahan the Red," Hanrahan aspires for a time to a very special knowledge: that of the magus. He buys the "Grimoire of Pope Honorius," "the book of the Great Dhoul which he [the Devil] wrote himself"[247] and with great trepidation sets out to invoke Cleena of the Wave, queen of the Southern faeries and symbol of eternal beauty.[248] Hanrahan is even more successful than he had hoped. At first Cleena comes to him only in the spirit: "he felt rather than saw, and more as an intellectual presence than as a substantial form, a tall woman, dressed in saffron, like the women of ancient Ireland."[249] Each night for about a week Cleena appears, growing progressively more visible until finally she materializes completely: Hanrahan awakes to find her "looking at her own foot-mark in the ashes."[250] The longing of Hanrahan for Cleena has transformed her from formless spirit to mortal woman. Cleena explains to him:

> You have always loved me better than your own soul, and you have sought for me everywhere and in everything, though without knowing what you sought, and now I have come to you and taken on mortality that I may share your sorrow.[251]

Unfortunately, Hanrahan is not a true magus, a redeemed adept, but merely a sorcerer's apprentice. He is not yet prepared for transcendence and so, terrified by what he has done and unable to recognize in the woman before him "the immortal of his dreams," he rejects Cleena because she awakens the memory of all the trouble women have brought upon him.[252] She vanishes, but not before cursing him:

> Owen Hanrahan the Red, you ~~have~~ looked so often upon the dust that when the Rose has blossomed there you think it but a pinch of coloured dust; but now I lay upon you a curse, and you shall see the rose everywhere, in the noggin, in woman's eye, in drifting phantoms, and seek to come to it in vain; it shall waken a fire in your heart, and in your feet, and in your hands. A sorrow of all sorrows is upon you, Owen Hanrahan the Red.[253]

O'Driscoll explains that Hanrahan rejects Cleena because he

> separates the spiritual and material worlds. He is able to enchant many mortal women, but he sees in them only the 'deciduous blossom of the dust and not the eternal beauty.' He is unable to see in his mortal beloved the embodiment of immortal beauty. When the spiritual is miraculously offered to him in mortal form his memories of mortality prevent him from accepting it. He is cursed consequently to see the spiritual in immaterial phantoms, to seek it in vain.[254]

Thus begin the peregrinations of Hanrahan which are to lead him through trials and suffering to vision and finally reunion with the divine he has rejected in this first story. The pattern of initiation is that which we saw in Axël: initiation begins with desire for the transcendent which leads to occult studies; the student experiences some success with his work but suddenly renounces the search and "descends" into the profane; a sorrowful journey of self-discovery and search for the opposite leads to acceptance of his fate as one destined for transformation; spiritual marriage with the female principle brings redemption and transcendence.[255]

Robert O'Driscoll points out that in replacing "The Book of the Great Dhoul and Hanrahan the Red" with "Red Hanrahan," Yeats changes Hanrahan from active to passive protagonist.[256] In the new story Hanrahan is sought out by the Sidhe. On a Samhain night of full moon they send "an old mountainy man" to beguile Hanrahan, distract him from his mortal love, Mary Lavelle, and lead him instead to the immortals.[257] The old man accomplishes the task he has been set by involving Hanrahan in a game of cards and then suddenly transforming one of the cards into a hare and the rest into hounds that chase after it.[258] Hanrahan joins in the chase, becoming one with the hounds, "symbol of longing and desire."[259] The hare and hound lead Hanrahan up the bare mountain past Ballylee until the hunt disappears into the air above him and he is left exhausted "in the heart of Slieve Echtge."[260]

Hanrahan enters into the mountain through a door he discovers near him and finds himself in that world of inverse correspondence that marks Tír-na-n-Og: outside it is a dark night at the beginning of winter; inside it is a summer day. In alchemical terms, Hanrahan, the investigator, filled with longing for spiritual transformation and the transcendent, has pursued his instinct (the hare), into the Mountain of the Adepts where he finds the temple of the wise: the "very big shining house" of the Sidhe.[261] Steffan Michelspacher's work, Cabala speculum artis et naturae, in alchymia (Augsburg, 1654) contains a drawing of this mountain which Jung reproduces in Psychology and Alchemy with the following description:

> The Mountain of the Adepts. The temple of the wise ("House of the Gathering" or of "Self-Collection"), lit by the sun and moon, stands on the seven [alchemical] stages, surmounted by the phoenix. The temple is hidden in the mountain--a hint that the philosophers' stone lies buried in the earth and must be extracted and cleansed. The zodiac in the background symbolizes the duration of the opus, while the four elements indicate wholeness. In foreground, blindfolded man and the investigator who follows his natural instinct [a rabbit entering the mountain].[262]

In the house of the Sidhe are "every grand thing Hanrahan had ever heard of, and every colour he had ever seen [and] . . . a woman, the most beautiful the world ever saw."[263] She is attended by "four grey old women" holding the four talismans of the Sidhe: the cauldron, stone, spear, and sword. The women drop hints about their treasures, echoing the words of the old man with the cards who had mumbled over and over: "Spades and Diamonds, Courage and Power; Clubs and Hearts, Knowledge and Pleasure."[264] The symbolism of the cauldron corresponds to that of hearts; the stone to diamonds; the spear to spades; and the sword to clubs. Ellmann tells us that Yeats associates the talismans with the suits of the Tarot and thus with the four elements of earth, air, water, and fire, each of which in turn "represents an aspect of the mind (a Zoa) that must be controlled":

> The spear is associated with passion, the sword with intellect, the cauldron with moving images (presumably imagined) and the stone with fixed ones (presumably seen). The man who has mastered each of these can hope to attain to the fifth element or final harmony ('Jerusalem'), where he is at one with universal forces, and where passion and intellect, desired image and actual fact, are united into one whole.[265]

What the four women are offering Hanrahan is complete control over his life and psyche and unity with the divine: the ultimate transformation. Hanrahan does not understand their offer, however:

Although he would like to question the women about the one who is like a queen and about their four treasures, he is unable to do so. Something holds him back because he is not yet ready for initiation: transformation comes only after suffering, after the revelation has been earned through toil.[266]

Although Hanrahan does not actively reject the Sidhe in "Red Hanrahan" as he does in "The Book of the Great Dhoul and Hanrahan the Red," the effect is the same. He falls asleep and awakes alone in the "outside" world with no memory of what has happened. In a sense he has been in the crucible (the cauldron) and instead of escaping into eternity through spiritual transformation has been born again into time. Hanrahan is suffering from what Raine terms "the amnesia of the generated soul who has forgotten eternity and the destination of the pilgrimage of life."[267] Hanrahan is left with only vague suggestions, like echoes, that something unusual has happened. On a Samhain night, a year after his experience in the old barn, he joins a group of men in a house on the roadside.

> When they brought out the cards he took them and began to shuffle them, and while he was shuffling them something seemed to come into his mind, and he put his hand to his face like one that is trying to remember, and he said, 'Was I ever here before, or where was I on a night like this?'[268]

Vague as they are, these echoes stirred up by the cards which serve as symbols are Hanrahan's "intimations of immortality." They prepare us for his final enlightenment and transcendence when, doubtlessly, he will recover his personal memories and take part in the ecstasy of the Great Memory. In his essay on "Magic," Yeats describes the three "doctrines" which are "the foundations of nearly all magical practices," doctrines which are investigated today as phenomena belonging to branches of parapsychology:

> (1) That the borders of our mind are ever shifting, and that many minds can flow into one another, as it were, and create or reveal a single mind, a single energy.
> (2) That the borders of our memories are as shifting, and that our memories are a part of one great memory, the memory of Nature herself.
> (3) That this great mind and great memory can be evoked by symbols.[269]

The first doctrine is essentially that of extra-sensory perception. Yeats relates many anecdotes that illustrate his experience of it, including the famous incident with the maid that occurred while he was staying at the Mathers' home in Paris.[270]

The second of the doctrines, that of the "Great Memory," the "dwelling-house of symbols, of images that are living souls," is based on Plato's anamnesis and akin to the Jungian theory of racial unconscious.[271] The Great Memory is the crucible of the earlier Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry, and the Anima Mundi of the later Per Amica Silentia Lunae. According to the doctrine of the Great Memory, knowledge is not acquired by logical or scientific processes of induction or deduction; knowledge is recognition of what one already knows because, having been before birth in the crucible, one shares in the Great Memory of Nature.

We have seen Janus discuss anamnesis with Axël: "Qui peut rien connaître, sinon ce qu'il reconnaît? Tu crois apprendre, tu te retrouves: l'univers n'est qu'un prétexte à ce développement de toute conscience" (Axël, 199). If knowledge is recognition, then, as Janus told Axël, instruction is useless. How then does one arrive at the recognition? What is it that wakes one up to what is already known? Participation in the Great Memory, in the wisdom of Tír-na-n-Og comes through magical enchantment, through meditation, revery, trances, madness--induced for example, by illness, drugs, religious fervour, or the pattern and rhythm of art, for art and magic work in similar ways: the "wavering, meditative, organic rhythms, which are the embodiment of the imagination" in poetry and music, and the "monotonous flash [of pattern in the visual arts] woven to take the eyes in a subtler enchantment" are but artistic means of entrancement.[272] By prolonging "the moment of contemplation, the moment when we are both asleep and awake, which is the one moment of creation, by hushing us with an alluring monotony," rhythm and pattern subdue the reason to the imagination and create that state "in which the mind liberated from the pressure of the will is unfolded in symbols."[273]

This liberation into symbolic vision does not happen for Hanrahan until he has suffered the trials of his misadventures in the four stories that follow "Red Hanrahan." In these stories he is cast out of domesticity and young love and strangled by the sorrows of the uroboric water-worm of life ("The Twisting of the Rope"). He shares song and tears with poor old women and blind beggars ("Hanrahan and Cathleen the Daughter of Houlihan"). He sacrifices himself for a young girl in distress ("Red Hanrahan's Curse"). And finally he experiences the vision of lovers that is evoked at twilight by a combination of his songs, grey mist, and falling rose petals which, as they flutter down into the valley, begin "to change their shape" until they look "like a troop of men and women far off in the mist, with the colour of the roses on them."[274] Although the vision of the lovers does not mark Hanrahan's transportation to Tír-na-n-Og, it represents an important stage in his progress to initiation. He is still not quite ready for transcendence and as a result the vision fills him with terror and disappears immediately when he screams aloud: "the troop of rose-leaves" still flutter in the air, for "the gateway of Eternity" has opened and shut again "in one beat of the heart."[275] Nevertheless, the gateway has opened.

It opens once again in the final story, "The Death of Hanrahan," when the collection of tales, which might truly be called a cycle, comes full circle back to harvest time, Slieve Echtge, four grey women, a card game, and the mysterious mutterings of the old mountainy man. Hanrahan has been in the serpent's mouth, but is about to shake free of the water-worm that is choking him, to escape from the Uroboros into eternity. His escape is effected through the agency of Winny Byrne, a cracked old hag who sings madly, "I am beautiful, I am beautiful."[276]

When Hanrahan follows Winny home one night, his transformation has already begun, for

> it seemed as if he was beginning to belong to some world out of sight and misty, that has for its mearing the colours that are beyond all other colours and the silences that are beyond all silences of this world. And sometimes he would hear coming and going in the wood music that when it stopped went from his memory like a dream; and once in the stillness of midday he heard a sound like the clashing of many swords, that went on for a long time without any break. And at the fall of night and at moonrise the lake would grow to be like a gateway of silver and shining stones, and there would come from its silence the faint sound of keening and of frightened laughter broken by the wind, and many pale beckoning hands.[277]

Hanrahan climbs the mountain to Winny's cabin, but does not enter because she does not seem to be there. He finds the cabin occupied by four old grey-haired women playing cards:

> And it seemed to him that they were saying, like the strange man in the barn long ago, 'Spades and Diamonds, Courage and Power. Clubs and Hearts, Knowledge and Pleasure.[278]

These words become an incantation for Hanrahan as he repeats them over and over to himself, eventually falling into a trance in which "between sleep and waking" he hears "the sound of the fighting between the friends and the ill-wishers of a man that is near his death."[279]

The action throughout the story takes place on two levels. The first is that of the natural plane on which Winny is an ugly old mortal woman, the four card players are four old women like her who fall to quarrelling over a question of fair play in the game, and Hanrahan, delirious from a fall into a bog-drain, hallucinates. The second level is that of the corresponding spiritual plane, symbolized by the natural, on which Winny and the four card players are women of the Sidhe and Hanrahan actually hears the waging of that "battle among the Sidhe at a man's death" which Yeats describes as "the battle of life and death" (Poems, 810).

Winny finds Hanrahan, brings him into her cabin and cares for him, but he grows progressively weaker physically. As he does, he gains in spiritual strength. The gateway to eternity that had earlier "opened and shut again in one beat of the heart," begins to open again: to paraphrase Heraclitus, Hanrahan is truly living his own death, dying his own life. He becomes aware of unseen presences in the cabin, hears faint, joyful voices and celestial music.

> And after a while his weakness left no place for pain, and there grew up about him a great silence like the silence in the heart of a lake, and there came through it, like the flame of a rushlight, the faint joyful voices ever and always.[280]

Eternity draws ever nearer as Hanrahan grows weaker and his vision stronger; he is finally surrounded by the divine light. He discovers the light to be "full of great shadowy figures rushing here and there" and he concludes, "I am after my death . . . and in the very heart of the music of Heaven. O Cherubim and Seraphim, receive my soul!"[281]

When the mystic light falls like a theatrical spotlight on four common household items--Winny's big cooking pot, her flat baking stone, a long rusty knife, and Hanrahan's own blackthorn stick--Hanrahan experiences the sudden enlightenment that occurs with the phenomenon of involuntary memory, one of the paths by which man may participate in the Great Memory while still living. The four items are symbols, correspondences of the ancient Irish talismans, which awaken in Hanrahan echoes as the cards had on that night a year after all his troubles began: "when he saw those four things, some memory came into Hanrahan's mind" and he inquires at long last, "The Cauldron, the Stone, the Sword, the Spear. What are they? Who do they belong to? And I have asked the question this time."[282] This time Hanrahan has been properly prepared for his entry into the temple of the wise; in response to his questions, he witnesses the transformation of Winny from old hag into the beautiful queen of faery, "Echtge, daughter of the Silver Hand."

> And then there came out of the mud-stiffened rags arms as white and as shadowy as the foam on a river, and they were put about his body, and a voice that he could hear well but that seemed to come from a long way off said to him in a whisper, "You will go looking for me no more upon the breasts of women."[283]

Hanrahan asks one final question and discovers with Echtge's answer that he himself is the mountain of the adepts, that he had all along possessed the treasure of Echtge buried, like the alchemist's gold, deep within himself:

> "I am one of the lasting people, of the lasting unwearied Voices, that make my dwelling in the broken and the dying, and those that have lost their wits; and I came looking for you, and you are mine until the whole world is burned out like a candle that is spent. And look up now," she said, "for the wisps that are for our wedding are lighted."[284]

With this final revelation earned after great suffering, Hanrahan is ready, like Axël in his family crypt, for union with his opposite, the beauty within himself; he is prepared for the mystic marriage of body and soul that will transport him in death to the eternity which "is the possession of one's self, as in a single moment."[285] As a natural tribute to his new supernatural ascendance, the two turf-cutters who find Hanrahan's body gather "men to wake him and women to keen him," and give him a "burying worthy of so great a poet."[286] At last he has the respect in death that was denied him in life.

Aside from the prose stories, Hanrahan appears also, as we have seen, in the titles of three of the poems in The Wind Among the Reeds, as well as in a number of other places in Yeats's poetry: the title of "Red Hanrahan's Song about Ireland" (1906) (Poems, 206);[287] "The

Tower" (1927) (Poems, 411-13); and "Alternative Song for the Severed Head in 'The King of the Great Clock Tower'" (1934).[288]

The later poems build on Hanrahan's legend as poet and wandering lecher. Despite appearances, he "That seemed but a wild wenching man" (Poems, 550) before the transformation of death brought him respect, was always much more than that, for every detail of Hanrahan's life and character is symbolic of his role as poet. His drunkenness and frenzy is the intoxication of the artist, his lechery the frantic pursuit of a surpassing beauty always just out of reach like the hare in the following lines (a reminiscence of the action in "Red Hanrahan"):

> Good fellows shuffled cards in an old bawn;
> And when that ancient ruffian's turn was on
> He so bewitched the cards under his thumb
> That all but the one card became
> A pack of hounds and not a pack of cards,
> And that he changed into a hare.
> Hanrahan rose in frenzy there
> And followed up those baying creatures towards--
>
> O towards I have forgotten what--enough! (Poems, 411-12)

Yeats grown old may have forgotten what Hanrahan seeks, but it is clear in the early works. In the same note to The Wind Among the Reeds mentioned before, Yeats describes Hanrahan as "fire blown by the wind . . . the simplicity of an imagination too changeable to gather permanent possessions, or the adoration of the shepherds" (Poems, 803). As befits his station as peasant poet and hedge schoolmaster, Hanrahan is, then, the simple, unsophisticated, constantly shifting imagination. In poems and tales alike he is a restless wanderer in quest of elusive beauty. "The Song of Wandering Aengus," which appeared untitled in the 1904/5 version of "Hanrahan's Vision," focusses on his restless search for beauty:

I went out to the hazel wood,
Because a fire was in my head,
And cut and peeled a hazel wand,
And hooked a berry to a thread;
And when white moths were on the wing,
And moth-like stars were flickering out,
I dropped the berry in a stream
And caught a little silver trout.

When I had laid it on the floor
I went to blow the fire aflame,
But something rustled on the floor,
And someone called me by my name:
It had become a glimmering girl
With apple blossom in her hair
Who called me by my name and ran
And faded through the brightening air.

Though I am old with wandering
Through hollow lands and hilly lands,
I will find out where she has gone,
And kiss her lips and take her hands;
And walk among long dappled grass,
And pluck till time and times are done
The silver apples of the moon,
The golden apples of the sun. (Poems, 149-50)[289]

In "Hanrahan reproves the Curlew" (Poems, 155, var. title), the cry of the bird reminds Hanrahan that he has lost "Maid Quiet" (Poems, 171), that he has been cursed both literally and figuratively by his own art, by his search for beauty:

The poet, Owen Hanrahan, under a bush of may,
Calls down a curse on his own head because it withers grey.[290]

Like the gleeman in "The Crucifixion of the Outcast," Hanrahan is the poet feared and rejected by society in good times, but sought out by it in moments of stress.[291] He is the primitive shaman of a primitive culture.

But if Hanrahan has been condemned by his art and artistic temperament, it is also through his poetry that he approaches redemption. It is in part Hanrahan's song that evokes the vision which is the brief opening of the gateway to eternity and serves as an indication of what is to follow. It is also through his songs that he hopes to live on and so remind Christian women to pray for him. In "The Vision of Hanrahan the Red" (Secret Rose, 1897), before he is united with the faery queen Hanrahan sings this song:

> O Colleens, kneeling by your altar rails long hence,
> When song I wove for my beloved hides the prayer,
> And smoke from this dead heart drifts through the violet
> air
> And covers away the smoke of myrrh and frankincense;
> Bend down and pray for the great sin I wove in song,
> Till Maurya of the wounded heart cry a sweet cry,
> And call to my beloved and me: 'No longer fly
> Amid the hovering, piteous, penitential throng.'
> (Poems, 173 var.)

Hanrahan is not yet aware that, in Finneran's words, "the heaven he is destined for is populated not by angels but by Nuada, Echtge, and others of the fairy race."[292] Although he lives in a Christian time, Hanrahan's pursuit of eternal beauty allies him, as it does Cumhal the gleeman, with the old order and so it is to Tír-na-n-Og, not the Christian heaven, that he is assumed at death.

Out of the Crucible: The Esoteric Works

If Aedh and Hanrahan are, respectively, divine and mortal poet, Michael Robartes, the last of the "triplicities of fire"[293] discussed in Yeats's note in The Wind Among the Reeds, is a scholar-critic and magus devoted to the past, to the old order, and to its reinstatement. He is "fire reflected in water, . . . the pride of the imagination brooding upon the greatness of its possessions, or the adoration of the Magi" (Poems, 803). In other words, Michael Robartes is an admirer of images, a collector of traditions, for images are "mirrored in water,"[294] and our traditions are the greatest of all possessions.

Like Aedh and Hanrahan, Robartes worships eternal beauty, but since he is an educated modern man far removed in time from Aedh's heroic age and in culture from Hanrahan's eighteenth-century peasant roots, he is forced to find his ideal in the romance of the past, rather than in the present. As a result, in the poems in The Wind Among the Reeds, nostalgia is the key word in connection with Robartes:

> When my arms wrap you round I press
> My heart upon the loveliness
> That has long faded from the world;
> The jewelled crowns that kings have hurled
> In shadowy pools, when armies fled;
> The love-tales wrought with silken thread
> By dreaming ladies upon cloth
> That has made fat the murderous moth;
> The roses that of old time were
> Woven by ladies in their hair,
> The dew-cold lilies ladies bore
> Through many a sacred corridor
> Where such grey clouds of incense rose
> That only God's eyes did not close:
> For that pale breast and lingering hand
> Come from a more dream-heavy land,
> A more dream-heavy hour than this;
> And when you sigh from kiss to kiss
> I hear white Beauty sighing, too,
> For hours when all must fade like dew,
> But flame on flame, and deep on deep,
> Throne over throne where in half sleep,
> Their swords upon their iron knees,
> Brood her high lonely mysteries. (Poems, 155-56)

Robartes, one of the most important of Yeats's personae, appears in his works many times over a period of more than forty years. Although his character changes somewhat with time, his love for bygone eras remains constant, right down to his last published appearance in the final edition of A Vision (1937). Here Yeats presents him as an "antithetical" man, anxiously awaiting the hatching of Leda's egg and the return to an antithetical phase in the historical cycle that this event will usher in.

Robartes is never content, however, simply to sit engrossed in wishful revery over the past. He is a man with a powerful will, determined to do something about bringing back the past in all its variety and beauty. To this end, in "Rosa Alchemica," the first work in which Robartes appears, he has joined the occult Order of the Alchemical Rose.[295] This order is dedicated to spiritual alchemy, to "the gradual distillation of the contents of the soul, until they [are] ready to put off the mortal and put on the immortal."[296] This transmutation is effected by a particular application of the solve et coagula formula: Robartes and his fellow adepts aim at the destruction (solve) of the "orderly and careful life" represented by what they view as the artificial unity of Christianity with its "devotion to one god" and its consequent "limited sense of beauty" and immortality.[297] From the prima materia that results from the shattering of the one "into numberless pieces" they hope to transform first themselves, and ultimately the world, by seeking a new paradoxical unity (coagula) with multiplicity, "a mystical union with the multitude who govern this world and time."[298]

Although Yeats has not yet evolved his philosophical system, its seeds are clearly evident in "Rosa Alchemica." Robartes and his order are closely linked with terror and destruction and the end of an era, as the setting of their temple suggests. Having been commanded to locate the Temple of the Alchemical Rose "between the pure multitude by the waves and the impure multitude of men," the order has built on the rocky sea coast of the extreme west of Ireland:

> when Michael Robartes pointed to a square ancient-looking house, with a much smaller and newer building under its lee, set out on the very end of a dilapidated and almost deserted pier, and said it was the Temple of the Alchemical Rose, I was possessed with the fantasy that the sea, which kept covering it with showers of white foam, was claiming it as part of some indefinite and passionate life, which had begun to war upon our orderly and careful days, and was about to plunge the world into a night as obscure as that which followed the downfall of the classical world. One part of my mind mocked this fantastic terror, but the other, the part that still lay half plunged in vision, listened to the clash of unknown armies, and shuddered at unimaginable fanaticisms, that hung in those grey leaping waves.[299]

Already we can see the opposition of primary and antithetical, without these terms being used. When Michael Robartes first enters the story, the narrator gives a thumbnail sketch of him:

> [his] wild red hair, fierce eyes, sensitive, tremulous lips and rough clothes, made him look . . . something between a debauchee, a saint, and a peasant.[300]

Robartes is a dionysian figure, part of that "indefinite and passionate life," as are his fellow devotees of the temple, who are robed in crimson costumes, dance a mad whirling dance in an atmosphere laden with incense, and have troubled eyes filled with "the brightness of uttermost desire."[301]

What Robartes and his comrades desire is unity with the multitude of immortals evoked in their ritual dance ("for rhythm was the wheel of Eternity, on which the transient and accidental could be broken, and the spirit set free").[302] These immortals are a rather eclectic crew, drawn from all the old gods of the past, whether mythological, historical, or literary, for the order believes seriously in the active and very real power of the imagination, in the transmutation of art into life. This is the logical consequence and inverse correspondence to that transmutation of life into art which the narrator treats as "a fanciful reverie" in his "little work on the Alchemists," Rosa Alchemica.[303] If the artist succeeds in transforming life into the "divine and imperishable substance" of art,[304] then it follows that he creates eternal gods who by definition live on forever, are capable of shaping human destinies and, indeed, of incarnation or, as the case may be, reincarnation. Robartes informs the narrator that

> there is no one who communes with only one god, . . . and the more a man lives in imagination and in a refined understanding, the more gods does he meet with and talk with, and the more does he come under the power of Roland, who sounded in the Valley of Roncesvalles the last trumpet of the body's will and pleasure; and of Hamlet, who saw them perishing away, and sighed; and of Faust, who looked for them up and down the world and could not find them; and under the power of all those countless divinities who have taken upon themselves spiritual bodies in the minds of the modern poets and romance-writers, and under the power of the old divinities, who since the Renaissance have won everything of their ancient worship except the sacrifice of birds and fishes, the fragrance of garlands and the smoke of incense. The many think humanity made these divinities, and that it can unmake them again; but we who have seen them pass in rattling harness, and in soft robes, and heard them speak with articulate voices while we lay in deathlike trance, know that they are always making and unmaking humanity, which is indeed but the trembling of their lips.[305]

These "countless divinities" are the "images that are living souls" who inhabit the "dwelling house of symbols," the Great Memory.[306]

In "The Symbolism of Poetry," Yeats elaborates on this concept of imaginative power, expressing it in a slightly less startling form by transferring the creative power from the art to the artist:

> All sounds, all colours, all forms, either because of their preordained energies or because of long association, evoke indefinable and yet precise emotions, or, as I prefer to think, call down among us certain disembodied powers, whose footsteps over our hearts we call emotions; . . . and the more perfect [the work of art] is, and the more various and numerous the elements that have flowed into its perfection, the more powerful will be the emotion, the power, the god it calls among us. Because an emotion does not exist, or does not become perceptible and active among us, till it has found its expression, in colour or in sound or in form, or in all of these, and because no two modulations or arrangements of these evoke the same emotion, poets and painters and musicians, and in a less degree because their effects are momentary, day and night and cloud and shadow, are continually making and unmaking mankind.[307]

The disembodied powers are called down from the crucible of the Great Memory. In the conclusion to his essay on "Magic" Yeats describes their invocation as an imitative act, the result of which serves as a veiled communiqué from the divine:

> imagination is always seeking to remake the world according to the impulses and the patterns in that Great Mind, and that Great Memory; . . . what we call romance, poetry, intellectual beauty, is the only signal that the supreme Enchanter, or some one in His councils, is speaking of what has been, and shall be again, in the consummation of time.[308]

The basis for this belief in the power of the imagination is "the doctrine from which all true doctrines rose": the independent reality of thought.[309] This doctrine is explained for the narrator by the book he studies in preparation for his initiation into the order:[310]

> If you imagine, it said, the semblance of a living being, it is at once possessed by a wandering soul, and goes hither and thither working good or evil, until the moment of its death has come; and gave many examples, received, it said, from many gods . . . and all divinities alike had revealed with many warnings and lamentations that all

> minds are continually giving birth to such beings, and sending them forth to work health or disease, joy or madness. If you would give forms to the evil powers, it went on, you were to make them ugly, thrusting out a lip with the thirsts of life, or breaking the proportions of a body with the burdens of life; but the divine powers would only appear in beautiful shapes, which are but, as it were, shapes trembling out of existence, folding up into timeless ecstasy, drifting with half-shut eyes into a sleepy stillness. The bodiless souls who descended into these forms were what men called the moods; and worked all great changes in the world; for just as the magician or the artist could call them when he would, so they could call out of the mind of the magician or the artist, or if they were demons, out of the mind of the mad or the ignoble, what shape they would, and through its voice and its gestures pour themselves out upon the world. In this way all great events were accomplished.[311]

The belief in the independent reality of thought was not for Yeats a mere fanciful literary revery, but a basic principle of magic in which he strongly believed, and a cornerstone of both his theory of history and psychology and his philosophy of symbolism.[312] In the spring of 1901, writing in a desperate attempt to prevent the break up of the Golden Dawn Order of Roseae Rubeae et Aureae Crucis (R.R. & A.C.), Yeats reminded the Adepts that in forming the Order as a Magical Order they had created "an Actual Being, an organic life holding within itself the highest life of its members now and in past times" because

> The central principle of all the Magic of power is that everything we formulate in the imagination, if we formulate it strongly enough, realises itself in the circumstances of life, acting either through our own souls, or through the spirits of nature.[313]

The members could not, therefore, as some wished, simply fracture the order into a number of separate research groups because this fragmentation would "create centres of life, which are centres of death, to this greater life; astral diseases sapping up, as it were, its vital fluids."[314] In effect, they would be committing the crime of deicide[315] because all imaginative creations based, as was the Order of R.R. & A.C., on symbols are, like the Stranger's lightning rods in Strindberg's To Damascus, mousetraps for the gods:[316]

> All art that is not mere story-telling, or mere portraiture, is symbolic, and has the purpose of those symbolic talismans which mediaeval magicians made with complex colours and forms, and bade their patients ponder over daily, and guard with holy secrecy; for it entangles, in complex colours and forms, a part of the Divine Essence. A person or a landscape that is a part of a story or a portrait, evokes but so much emotion as the story or the portrait can permit without loosening the bonds that make it a story or a portrait; but if you liberate a person or a landscape from the bonds of motives and their actions, causes and their effects, and from all bonds but the bonds of your love, it will change under your eyes, and become a symbol of an infinite emotion, a perfected emotion, a part of the Divine Essence; for we love nothing but the perfect, and our dreams make all things perfect, that we may love them. Religious and visionary people, monks and nuns, and medicine-men and opium-eaters, see symbols in their trances; for religious and visionary thought is thought about perfection and the way to perfection; and symbols are the only things free enough from all bonds to speak of perfection.[317]

The belief in the symbol's power to evoke the divine and thus to transform mortal to immortal lies behind Yeats's statement that symbols are "the greatest of all powers whether they are used consciously by the masters of magic, or half unconsciously by their successors, the poet, the musician and the artist."[318] Robert O'Driscoll concludes that for Yeats

> A symbol . . . is the unique way in which a spiritual mood becomes manifest in intellectual or material form. It is at once the visible mortal blossom of an invisible immortal world and a hand "pointing the way into some divine labyrinth."[319]

The most "visible mortal blossom" in Yeats's work, especially in this early period, is the rose. It is, of course, a central symbol in

"Rosa Alchemica." When the narrator proceeds to initiation in Michael Robartes' Temple of the Alchemical Rose, he carries "a little chainless censer of bronze, wrought into the likeness of a rose."[320] From this censer comes a "smoke of ever-changing colour" which assists in inducing the trance that leads to the vision he is to experience.

The narrator's rose censer, like Hanrahan's rose branch, opens the gateway to eternity. When the alchemical challenge and password have been exchanged--"'Is the work of the Incorruptible Fire at an end?' . . . 'The perfect gold has come from the athanor'"[321]--the Aspirant and his Sponsor/Guide cross the threshold into the temple, a great circular dancing floor of green stone with "a pale Christ on a pale cross . . . wrought in the midst."[322] On the ceiling is "an immense rose wrought in mosaic."[323] When the ritual dance commences, it winds in and out "tracing upon the floor the shapes of petals that copied the petals in the rose overhead."[324] The superimposition of rose upon crucifix creates the symbol of the rosy-cross with all this implies.[325]

The symbolism of the rosy-cross is complex because of the conjunction of opposites, but among its elements, the symbol includes the mystical union of human and divine. In a note to The Wind Among the Reeds, Yeats refers to an image of the rosy-cross which he fancies he has created in his poetry, but which in fact exists only in the note:

> The Rose has been for many centuries a symbol of spiritual love and supreme beauty. The Count Goblet D'Alviella thinks that it was once a symbol of the sun, --itself a principal symbol of the divine nature, and the symbolic heart of things. The lotus . . . was in some Eastern countries imagined blossoming upon the Tree of Life, as the Flower of Life, and is thus represented in Assyrian bas-reliefs. Because the Rose, the flower sacred to the Virgin Mary, and the flower that Apuleius' adventurer ate, when he was

> changed out of the ass's shape and received into the fellowship of Isis, is the western Flower of Life, I have imagined it growing upon the Tree of Life. (Poems, 811)[326]

Since in Christian tradition the cross is seen as the Tree of Life, this passage can be seen as comment on the symbol of the rosy-cross.

In tracing the multiplicity of the rose petals on the single cross with its one god, the dancers in "Rosa Alchemica" not only "trouble [Christ's] unity with their multitudinous feet," but also unite the old pagan order of passionate intensity (suggested by the crimson robes, the rose, and all the many colours found in the temple) to the new Christian order marked by sacrifice and "brooding purity" (represented by the pale deity on his pale cross).[327] The result, the dancers hope, will be a transformed unity, "that elaborate spiritual beauty" sought by the narrator.[328] The rose itself is the symbol of this new unity for, being multi-petalled, it is simultaneously one and many.[329] The circular rose in the circular room of the Temple of the Alchemical Rose, both starting and end points of transformation, is yet another Uroboros figure.

The dance is also, as Schuler points out, a ritual which

> celebrates the theory of "correspondences" found in the most famous of alchemical tracts, the Emerald Table of Hermes: "What is below is like that which is above, and what is above is like that which is below. . .'."[330]

More than a mere celebration, however, the dance is a magic invocation of the gods who dwell in the rose, for as Mary the mother of Christ knows, even if her son does not, "every petal is a god."[331] The invocation works on the principle of expressing desire for the divine, for as Yeats notes in his study of Blake, dancing is "the motion of desire in the lower or mortal world, as howling is its sound-symbol. David dancing before the ark symbolizes the masculine before the feminine, the energetic before the secretive."[332]

The invocation is successful, for the petals of the rose on the ceiling fall slowly to the floor and are transformed "into the likeness of living beings of an extraordinary beauty" who, "faint and cloud-like" at first, gradually assume a more definite shape as the dance continues and they join in.[333] Clearly, then, the rose is a symbol for the dwelling place of the gods, for an expanded Tír-na-n-Og where Christian, Greek, Persian, or Celt can be found, as in the poem "The Secret Rose."[334]

The rose is the early "goblin flower" made honest by marriage to occult tradition. The mere juxtaposing of the words "rosa" and "alchemica" throughout the story attach to Yeats's rose all the associations we have seen linked to the alchemical rose in _Axël_.[335] It is a symbol with antithetical significance (in both the common and Yeatsian senses of the word), for it suggests, on the one hand, mortal beauty, human passion, and the life of the senses (represented by the luxury of the "marvellous passage" leading to the great circular room of the dance, and by the dance itself into which the narrator was swept on "a mysterious wave of passion"); and, on the other hand, immortal beauty, eternal love, and the life of the spirit (represented by the "beautiful Grecian faces and august Egyptian faces" and the veiled figure of Eros).[336]

This plurisignificance extends to the rose of Yeats's poetry also. We have seen the rose associated with "Eternal beauty wandering on her way"; for example, in "To the Rose upon the Rood of Time" and in

"To Ireland in the Coming Times." Yeats also depicts the "Rose of Ideal Beauty" as having been plucked and "cast into the world" (Poems, 174) where it takes root in beautiful mortal women ("The Rose of the World") who in turn become symbols of the divine source of their beauty.

Because of this dual role, Yeats's alchemical rose is linked with both the destructive (solve) side of alchemy and its subsequent constructive (coagula) aspect. The narrator dances with "an immortal august woman, who had black lilies in her hair."[337] One of the "living beings of an extraordinary beauty" transformed from the petals of the rose, she is "that Death which is Beauty herself":

> her dreamy gesture seemed laden with a wisdom more profound than the darkness that is between star and star, and with a love like the love that breathed upon the waters; and we danced on and on, the incense drifted over us and round us, covering us away as in the heart of the world, and ages seemed to pass, and tempests to awake and perish in the folds of our robes and in her heavy hair.
>
> Suddenly I remembered that her eyelids had never quivered, and that her lilies had not dropped a black petal, nor shaken from their places, and understood with great horror that I danced with one who was more or less than human, and who was drinking up my soul as an ox drinks up a wayside pool: and I fell, and darkness passed over me.[338]

The narrator escapes the powers of the rose when he awakens the next day to discover the luxuriant beauty of the temple was but an illusion of his visionary state:

> I awoke suddenly as though something had awakened me, and saw that I was lying on a roughly painted floor, and that on the ceiling, which was at no great distance, was a roughly painted rose, and about me on the walls half-finished paintings.[339]

He flees the temple, but Robartes and his friends are not so lucky; they are stoned to death[340] by the local Catholic fishermen who, as appropriate representatives of the Christian order,[341] view them as idolaters. Their destruction is a tragedy only in the natural world, however, for Robartes has already informed the narrator that "I and mine . . . are long past human hurt or help, being incorporate with immortal spirits, and when we die it shall be the consummation of the supreme work."[342] The fishermen simply serve as the agents of delivery for the adepts of the order, who have, like Axël and Sara, undergone the final transmutation and been united for all time with the divine essence in the heart of the rose.[343]

Before their deaths, Robartes and his fellow adepts had become mere living masks of the divine and were, therefore, ready to enter Tír-na-n-Og.[344] The narrator escapes because his time has not yet come. Since he has been only "half initiated into the Order of the Alchemical Rose"[345] and, in Finneran's words, "refuses to accept the total loss of selfhood necessary to reach the eternal,"[346] he is unprepared for union with the indefinite multitude, and is, therefore, rejected by the divine. This rejection is foreshadowed when the narrator experiences a vision just before entering the rose room:

> the fumes of the incense, helped perhaps by [Robartes'] mysterious glamour, made me fall again into a dream, in which I seemed to be a mask, lying on the counter of a little Eastern shop. Many persons, with eyes so bright and still that I knew them for more than human, came in and tried me on their faces, but at last flung me into a corner laughing.[347]

The whole of "Rosa Alchemica" is an illustration of the power of imagination and an expression of the ambivalence towards this power which we have seen already embodied in the works surrounding Aedh and Hanrahan. The sequel to "Rosa Alchemica," "The Tables of the Law," continues Yeats's investigation of these themes.

"The Tables of the Law" introduces a new character, Owen Aherne, who, like Robartes, is to remain part of Yeats's "circus" until nearly the end.[348] In many ways Aherne is the opposite of Robartes. Far from being a debauchee or a peasant in search of the past, he is a refined man with "long delicate fingers" who comes from a family rich in tradition (it has given many Jesuits and priests, "some of no little fame," to the Church and the family house contains a chapel "whose threshold has been worn smooth by the secret worshippers of the penal times").[349] Despite his worldly gifts, Aherne himself was nearly a priest once. He "cared neither for wine, women, nor money, and had thoughts for nothing but theology and mysticism."[350]

The narrator, who was a student in Paris with him as well as with Robartes, sees Aherne as "the supreme type of our [Irish] race," possessed of "the nature, which is half monk, half soldier of fortune, and must needs turn action into dreaming, and dreaming into action."[351] He is a man caught between worlds and involved in perpetual metamorphosis. For such a man "there is no order, no finality, no contentment in this world."[352] Aherne hates life and hopes to see its transformation when the beautiful arts shall "overthrow nations, and finally life herself, by sowing everywhere unlimited desires, like torches thrown into a burning city."[353] The narrator feels that this hope is just an instance of youthful indulgence in paradox, but this is clearly not the case, for Aherne exults in the destructiveness of the Liber inducens in

Evangelium aeternum, his equivalent of Robartes' Speculum Angelorum et Hominum. He awaits the passing of the present order, the Kingdom of the Son (which has replaced the Kingdom of the Father), and the establishment of a new order, the Kingdom of the Spirit.

The narrator fancies that Aherne is "more orthodox in most of his beliefs than Michael Robartes." Yet his is surely a strange orthodoxy that allows him as a student to belong to a group devoted "to speculations about alchemy and mysticism" and later to concur with Joachim of Flora's heresy of destruction and hatred, which teaches that there is an election of an elite chosen,

> not to live, but to reveal that hidden substance of God which is colour and music and softness and a sweet odour; and that these have no father but the Holy Spirit. Just as poets and painters and musicians labour at their works, building them with lawless and lawful things alike, so long as they embody the beauty that is beyond the grave, these children of the Holy Spirit labour at their moments with eyes upon the shining substance on which Time has heaped the refuse of creation; for the world only exists to be a tale in the ears of the coming generations; and terror and content, birth and death, love and hatred, and the fruit of the Tree, are but instruments for that supreme art which is to win us from life and gather us into eternity like doves into their dove-cots.[354]

Aherne believes literally, then, in the transmutation of life into art which in "Rosa Alchemica" is but fanciful revery for the narrator. He represents an expression of two important symbolist phrases: Villiers's "Vivre? les serviteurs feront cela pour nous" (Axël, 261), and Mallarmé's "tout, au monde, existe pour aboutir à un livre."[355]

Again art and imagination impinge on life with tragic results. Aherne goes away to learn "all accidents and destinies" that he might return to write his secret law upon ivory tablets and establish the "Kingdom of the Holy Spirit," but when next the narrator sees him he is a changed man, a victim of the degenerative metamorphosis of premature old age:

> I saw a tall and bent man walking slowly along the other side of the quay. I recognized, with a start, in a lifeless mask with dim eyes, the once resolute and delicate face of Owen Aherne.[356]

His moment of happiness with the philosophy of the Liber inducens in Evangelium aeternum has been quickly transformed into an eternity of misery as he, like his Celtic counterparts Mongan and Fergus (Poems, 177, 102), realizes the curse inherent in the sin of angelism:

> I am not among those for whom Christ died, and this is why I must be hidden. I have a leprosy that even eternity cannot cure. I have seen the whole, and how can I come again to believe that a part is the whole? I have lost my soul because I have looked out of the eyes of the angels.[357]

The opposition of Robartes and Aherne is something that grows stronger and clearer in Yeats's works with the passing of time. It is not total in these early stories, as the destructive element in Aherne's character bears witness. There is a revision in the Collected Works (1908) edition of "The Tables of the Law" that is important in illustrating the manner in which Yeats wavered on this question of opposition. The later Aherne is depicted as a man of the mind, a man who prides himself on his reason. Passion is not a word associated with him. The following passage presents Aherne in quite a different light, however:

> and when I know what principle of life, discoverable at first by imagination and instinct, I am to express, I will gather my pupils that they may discover their law

> in the study of my law, as poets and painters discover their own art of expression by the study of some Master. I know nothing certain as yet but this--I am to become completely alive, that is, completely passionate, for beauty is only another name for perfect passion. I shall create a world where the whole lives of men shall be articulated and simplified as if seventy years were but one moment, or as they were the leaping of a fish or the opening of a flower.[358]

This passage was not in the earlier edition, and was removed again in 1925 in Early Poems and Stories. Probably Yeats saw a contradiction in having Aherne choose "to become completely alive" in the paragraph immediately after the one in which he lauds those who "were elected, not to live, but to reveal that hidden substance of God."

Michael Robartes and Owen Aherne play very minor roles in "The Adoration of the Magi," and these only through allusion, since both are dead--Robartes literally and Aherne spiritually. It is three old men, disciples in a sense, of Michael Robartes (who has "told them of the coming again of the gods and the ancient things"),[359] and a dying woman who occupy the centre of the stage.

The three old men, the magi, are much like Robartes in that they are simple but learned men who "had cared all their lives for nothing except for those classical writers and old Gaelic writers who expounded an heroic and simple life."[360] They, too, then, are "the pride of the imagination brooding upon the greatness of its possessions, or the adoration of the Magi," for their hearts "had never endured the body and pressure of our time, but only of distant times."[361]

The dying woman is a very interesting character, for she is one of the many mortal women in Yeats's work who act as medium between the physical and spiritual worlds, or between the present and its opposites:

the past and the future. As such she should be compared with later characters like Kusta ben Luka's wife (and Mrs. Yeats), Mary Bell and Denise de L'Isle-Adam, Leda and the Virgin Mary.[362] All are women; revelation or the new age comes through their bodies as reincarnation did through the bodies of the ancient Celtic women; and all are more or less ignorant of their role in the enlightenment and the cyclic transformations of history.[363]

The dying woman in "The Adoration of the Magi" was once beautiful. The implication is that she was a whore,[364] and now she is presented as the new Leda. Although Leda's name does not actually appear in the story until 1925 (The Collected Works), that is, until the time of the first edition of A Vision and full involvement in the "system," it is implied as background to the prediction of Hermes: "After you have bowed down [to the dying woman] the old things shall be again, and another Argo shall carry heroes over the deep, and another Achilles beleaguer another Troy."[365] Beginning in 1925, however, Yeats makes the link between Leda and the woman of "The Adoration of the Magi" specific: the three old men have been sent to Paris by an occult voice to seek out this dying woman who "would give them secret names and thereby so transform the world that another Leda would open her knees to the swan, another Achilles beleaguer Troy."[366] At the woman's death bed they are told by her companion, "At the moment when you knocked she was suddenly convulsed and cried out as I have heard a woman in childbirth and fell backward as though in a swoon."[367] The voice of "Hermes the Shepherd of the Dead" and messenger of the gods speaks through one of the old men and explains this cry:

> The woman who lies there has given birth, and that which she bore has the likeness of a unicorn and is most unlike man of all living things, being cold, hard and virginal. It seemed to be born dancing; and was gone from the room wellnigh upon the instant, for it is of the nature of the unicorn to understand the shortness of life. She does not know it has gone, for she fell into a stupor while it danced, but bend down your ears that you may learn the names that it must obey.[368]

In The Unicorn from the Stars Yeats explains the symbolism of the unicorn: according to Father John it symbolizes "virginal strength, a rushing, lasting, tireless strength" (Plays, 660).[369] In this play, the young "dreamer" Martin has a vision which in a sense is engendered by the birth of the unicorn in "The Adoration of the Magi." He is swept up by the host of the Sidhe. As they ride, their white horses are transformed into unicorns which enter a beautiful townland with orderly gardens, wheatfields, and vine-yards. Here they wreak havoc, trampling the grapes and destroying the ripe wheat (Plays, 259-60).[370] The Sidhe and the unicorns represent "the old disturbed exalted life, the old splendour" (Plays, 673) come to re-establish itself by destroying the new Christian order with its bloodless sacrifice of bread and wine. It is only after a disastrous attempt to organize a "League of the Unicorns" (Plays, 682) to march against the world and destroy Church and Law that Martin comes late to the realization that his business is "not reformation but revelation" (Plays, 704), that his vision relates to the inner man, not the exterior world:

> The battle we have to fight is fought out in our own mind. . . . I thought the battle was here, and that the joy was to be found here on earth, that all one had to do was to bring again the old wild earth of the stories--but no, it is not here; we shall not come to that joy, that battle, till we have put out the senses, everything that can be seen and handled, as I put out this candle. . . .

> We must put out the whole world as I put out this candle. . . . We must put out the light of the stars and the light of the sun and the light of the moon, . . . till we have brought everything to nothing once again. I saw in a broken vision, but now all is clear to me. Where there is nothing, where there is nothing--there is God! (Plays, 705, 708-09)

Jung discusses at some length the unicorn and its single horn, frequent symbols in alchemy. A very ambiguous symbol, the unicorn is an image of alchemical Mercurius, a fact of which Yeats may have been aware since he assigns to Hermes the task of presenting the symbol in "The Adoration of the Magi." The unicorn is alexipharmic, its horn in particular having healing qualities and often being used as a cup. In this connection, Jung notes that

> The horn as an emblem of vigour and strength has a masculine character, but at the same time it is a cup, which, as a receptable, is feminine. So we are dealing here with a "uniting symbol" that expresses the bipolarity of the archetype.[371]

The unicorn is an ancient pagan symbol that has been baptized by Christianity and become among other things an allegory for Christ. As a "uniting symbol," then, it is, like the rose, an appropriate representation for the unity in multiplicity sought by the Order of the Alchemical Rose.

The birth of the unicorn in "The Adoration of the Magi" is the birth of a new age which shall trouble the tranquillity of the old.[372] The dying woman has been chosen to usher in the new because,

> When the Immortals would overthrow the things that are to-day and bring the things that were yesterday, they have no one to help them, but one whom the things that are to-day have cast out. Bow down and very low, for they have chosen this woman in whose heart all follies have gathered, and in whose body all desires have awakened; this woman who has been driven out of Time and has lain upon the bosom of Eternity.[373]

The outcast of the old age is the hero of the new. The figures of Hanrahan and of this woman are similar in several respects.

Before leaving these three stories, we should look more closely at the character of the narrator. Although he is not ostensibly the central figure in any of the stories, his presence is nonetheless a subtly dominating one. The beginning and end of each story focus on the narrator, and in the course of the tales we learn quite a bit about him. Although he is nameless, and obviously not Yeats, the real man (he does, however, exhibit certain elements of Yeats's character), he is the precursor of "Mr. Yeats," the character in the poems and stories that surround A Vision.

The narrator is, like Aherne, an Irishman from an illustrious family.[374] He is an author with an artist's interest in alchemy who suffers from the weariness Yeats describes in "The Autumn of the Body," the weariness that arises with "a growing belief that we know nothing but the fading and flowering of the world."[375] Because he hungers after spiritual and aesthetic transmutation, he has closeted himself in the Huysmansesque isolation of his ancestral home in Dublin. Here in full fin-de-siècle decadent style, surrounded by his eclectic art collection, "the gold born in the crucibles of others," he has cut himself off totally from the outside world in a vain attempt to achieve the spiritual alchemist's dream of "immaterial ecstasy": "I had dissolved indeed the mortal world and lived amid immortal essences, but had obtained no miraculous ecstasy."[376]

The narrator's existence is "a cry of measureless desire for a world made wholly of essences," a world in which life has been transmuted into art.[377] This is the world Yeats himself longs for in "The Autumn of the Body" when he writes

> The arts are, I believe, about to take upon their shoulders the burdens that have fallen from the shoulders of priests, and to lead us back upon our journey by filling our thoughts with the essences of things, and not with things. We are about to substitute once more the distillation of alchemy for the analyses of chemistry and for some other sciences; and certain of us are looking everywhere for the perfect alembic that no silver or golden drop may escape.[378]

The perfect alembic Yeats seeks is a new form of art. He felt in the early part of this period that this new form was emerging under the influence of the symbolist movement and the desire "to get to some kind of disembodied beauty" which we observed earlier.[379] The artist and his art must, however, be forever experimenting and developing, for stasis in art as in language and life brings death. Thus, as we have seen, Yeats discards his attempts to escape from form and submits instead to the opposite impulse, "to create form, to carry the realization of beauty as far as possible."[380] Robert O'Driscoll points out that as a working poet and not a mere collector of the gold of others, Yeats comes to recognize what his narrator in "Rosa Alchemica" does not:

> that it is only through the constant activity of art, not in merely surrounding oneself with works of art, that ecstasy can be experienced and a changing heart transmuted for a moment into a changeless work of art. But this transmutation is not a single definitive alchemical act: as long as mortal breath remains the artist must return to the material world to which, during the moment of creative activity, he has become indifferent. Life, therefore, when lived intensely, becomes an endless oscillation between the spiritual vision and material life, and death becomes the consummation of the ecstatic process, for at death the weary human artist can become the weariless spiritual thing he has created: the poet can become the poem; the dancer can become the dance.
>
> To the narrator of Rosa Alchemica, art, although divine, is a dead reality. He does not realize that ecstasy for a

> human being is eternal but momentary, that the ultimate alchemical act is a dream and can never be completed as long as mortal breath remains.[381]

Although the temptation might be there to give up the alchemical quest or to turn like the transformed magus into the secret silence which the narrator in his isolation counterfeits, Yeats realizes, like Villiers, that the poet/alchemist must continue his search for the perfect alembic, and that until he finds it he must make use of the least flawed of those available to him. The poet cannot turn to silence, for it is his job to distill as much of the divine essence as possible in his art and in this way convey to the rest of mankind the transforming elixir of life. It is in part because of the public nature of the art form that Yeats became involved in the writing of drama and its production on the stage. In the Preface to Poems 1899-1905 he explains:

> I know that I have been busy with the Great Work, no lesser thing than that, although it may be the Athanor has burned too fiercely, or too faintly and fitfully, or that the prima materia has been ill-chosen.
> Some of my friends . . . do not understand why I have not been content with lyric writing. But one can only do what one wants to do, and to me drama--and I think it has been the same with other writers--has been the search for more of manful energy, more of cheerful acceptance of whatever arises out of the logic of events, and for clean outline, instead of those outlines of lyric poetry that are blurred with desire and vague regret. All art is in the last analysis an endeavour to condense as out of the flying vapour of the world an image of human perfection, and for its own and not the art's sake, and that is why the labour of the alchemists, who were called artists in their day, is a befitting comparison for all deliberate change of style. We live with images, that is our renunciation, for only the silent sage or saint can make himself into that perfection, turning the life inward at the tongue as though it heard the cry Secretum meum mihi; choosing not, as we do, to say all and know nothing, but to know all and to say nothing. (Poems, 849)

Although he does not achieve "the supreme dream of the alchemist, the transmutation of the weary heart into a weariless spirit," the narrator of "Rosa Alchemica" does undergo spiritual and aesthetic transmutation.[382] His life and writings are transformed by the experiences he has with Michael Robartes and his friends, but not in the positive fashion he hoped for: his writings have "grown less popular and less intelligible" and his once "orderly and careful life" has been so troubled that he contemplates taking refuge "in the habit of Saint Dominic."[383] Oisin and Hanrahan also discover that he who seeks regenerative transformation without proper preparation or, having been given the opportunity of transcendence, rejects it, falls back into life with a mighty bump.

Part of the cause of the narrator's rejection of the transcendence offered by the Order of the Alchemical Rose is the split within his personality. He is a man caught between two worlds, a man who, as Robartes points out, is at a crossway.[384] His is a self divided between orthodoxy and the world of reality, represented by his Catholicism and his politically minded ancestors; and occultism and the world of the imagination, represented by his interest in alchemy, his friendship with Robartes and Aherne, and his taste in interior decor. The narrator describes his life before the fatal meeting with Robartes:

> I had gathered about me all gods because I believed in none, and experienced every pleasure because I gave myself to none, but held myself apart, individual, indissoluble, a mirror of polished steel. I looked in the triumph of this imagination at the birds of Hera, glittering in the light of the fire as though of Byzantine mosaic; and to my mind, for which symbolism was a

> necessity, they seemed the doorkeepers of my world, shutting out all that was not of as affluent a beauty as their own; and for a moment I thought, as I had thought in so many other moments, that it was possible to rob life of every bitterness except the bitterness of death; and then a thought which had followed this thought, time after time, filled me with a passionate sorrow. All those forms: that Madonna with her brooding purity, those delighted ghostly faces under the morning light, those bronze divinities with their passionless dignity, those wild shapes rushing from despair to despair, belonged to a divine world wherein I had no part; and every experience, however profound, every perception, however exquisite, would bring me the bitter dream of a limitless energy I could never know, and even in my most perfect moment I would be two selves, the one watching with heavy eyes the other's moment of content.[385]

As a man at the crossway between two worlds, the narrator is ripe for transformation. He is particularly susceptible to suggestion and hence is an easy target for the enchantments through which the transcendent may reveal itself to man. The narrator falls easily into trances and is particularly receptive to the dominance of Robartes who had held a mesmeric power over him during their student days, a power which he still possesses. Not long after Robartes appears on the scene he has the narrator completely under his control and the latter experiences a vision. Swept away on "a sea of flame," the narrator hears a voice cry,

> 'The mirror is broken in two pieces,' and another voice answer, 'The mirror is broken in four pieces,' and a more distant voice cry with an exultant cry, 'The mirror is broken into numberless pieces'; and then a multitude of pale hands were reaching towards me, and strange gentle faces bending above me, and half-wailing and half-caressing voices uttering words that were forgotten the moment they were spoken. I was being lifted out of the tide of flame, and felt my memories, my hopes, my thoughts, my will, everything I held to be myself, melting away; then I seemed to rise through numberless companies of beings who were, I understood, in some way more certain than thought, each wrapped in his eternal moment, in the

> perfect lifting of an arm, in a little circlet of rhythmical words, in dreaming with dim eyes and half-closed eyelids. And then I passed beyond these forms, which were so beautiful they had almost ceased to be, and, having endured strange moods, melancholy, as it seemed, with the weight of many worlds, I passed into that Death which is Beauty herself, and into that Loneliness which all the multitudes desire without ceasing. All things that had ever lived seemed to come and dwell in my heart, and I in theirs; and I had never again known mortality or tears, had I not suddenly fallen from the certainty of vision into the uncertainty of dream, and become a drop of molten gold falling with immense rapidity, through a night elaborate with stars, and all about me a melancholy exultant wailing. I fell and fell and fell, and then the wailing was but the wailing of the wind in the chimney, and I awoke to find myself leaning upon the table and supporting my head with my hands.[386]

The narrator is passing into the crucible and beginning to undergo the initial stages of alchemical transmutation: calcination (in the sea of flame), putrefaction (breaking of the mirror), solution (melting away of everything he held to be himself), distillation (rising through the companies of immortals), and conjunction (union in beauty with all things that had ever lived).

Although he falls back into the profane with the descent from vision through dream to the sorrow of wakefulness, the narrator agrees to "go wherever Robartes wills, and do whatever he bids him, for, he says, "I have been with eternal things."[387] He seeks the completion of his transformation but this is not to be because the narrator lacks one of the essential components of a successful initiate's character: courage. Eliphas Lévi warns those who would enter into the _sanctum regnum_, into the power of the magus:

> quatre choses sont indispensables: une intelligence éclairée par l'étude, une audace que rien n'arrête, une volonté que rien ne brise et une discrétion que rien ne puisse corrompre ou enivrer.
>
> SAVOIR, OSER, VOULOIR, SE TAIRE, voilà les quatre verbes du mage.[388]

Each of the three stories presents the narrator making an excursion, direct or indirect, into the realm of the occult, only to flee in terror--literally at the end of "Rosa Alchemica" and "The Tables of the Law," and spiritually in "The Adoration of the Magi." The fact that the governing influence in the narrator's life is mediaevalism[389] is an indication of the division within him, for, a modern man, he seeks in the middle ages the integration of physical and spiritual, reality and imagination that he cannot find in his own age:

> I no longer live an elaborate and haughty life, but seek to lose myself among the prayers and the sorrows of the multitude. I pray best in poor chapels, where frieze coats brush against me as I kneel, and when I pray against the demons I repeat a prayer which was made I know not how many centuries ago to help some poor Gaelic man or woman who had suffered with a suffering like mine:--
>
> Seacht b-páidreacha fó seacht
> Chuir Muire faoi n-a Mac,
> Chuir Brighid faoi n-a brat,
> Chuir Dia faoi n-a neart,
> Eidir sinn 'san Sluagh Sidhe,
> Eidir sinn 'san Sluagh Gaoith.
>
> Seven paters seven times,
> Send Mary by her Son,
> Send Bridget by her mantle,
> Send God by His strength,
> Between us and the faery host,
> Between us and the demons of the air.[390]

Like Robartes and Aherne, the narrator is pulled to the past, but in his case it is to the unity of the orthodox Christian past, rather than to the multiplicity of the ancient order, for he seeks in Catholicism, "the only definite faith," refuge from those "voices of exultation and lamentation" that call him to the "indefinite and passionate life"[391] he so fears.

The Shadowy Waters

The last work I shall examine in this chapter is the one which is most frequently associated with Villiers: Yeats's verse drama, The Shadowy Waters. This is the play that William York Tindall describes as "a translation of Axël into nautical terms."[392] Since both Harry Goldgar and Lloyd C. Parks have examined in detail the parallels between The Shadowy Waters and Axël,[393] I shall restrict myself to those similarities that are relevant to two major concerns in Yeats's play: imagination and its power; and illusion and reality in life.

The resemblances between Axël and The Shadowy Waters go beyond such general characteristics as might be attributed to most symbolist drama. Goldgar and Parks have demonstrated that there is a close parallel between the two plays in all aspects--themes, setting, situation, characters, motifs, and symbols. Both plays present the confrontation of two opposing worlds, their struggle for dominance over the hero, and the eventual triumph of the ideal. The two worlds are, on the one hand, the subjective, poetic, visionary world of the Ever-living, of Janus and the magus, and of the enlightened Forgael and Axël; and, on the other hand, the objective, common sense, sensual world of the sailors, of the servants, and of the unenlightened Dectora and Sara.

Yeats provided the following summary of The Shadowy Waters in 1906:

> Once upon a time, when herons built their nests in old men's beards, Forgael, a Sea-King of ancient Ireland, was promised by certain humanheaded birds love of a supernatural intensity and happiness. These birds were the souls of the dead, and he followed them over seas towards the sunset, where their final rest is. By means of a magic harp, he could call them about him

> when he would and listen to their speech. His friend Aibric, and the sailors of his ship, thought him mad, or that this mysterious happiness could come after death only, and that he and they were being lured to destruction. Presently they captured a ship, and found a beautiful woman upon it, and Forgael subdued her and his own rebellious sailors by the sound of his harp. The sailors fled upon the other ship, and Forgael and the woman drifted on alone following the birds, awaiting death and what comes after, or some mysterious transformation of the flesh, an embodiment of every lover's dream. (Plays, 340)

Although The Shadowy Waters contains "a good deal of incidental Irish folklore and mythology," it was not, Yeats tells us, "founded on any particular story" (Plays, 1283) and yet in this summary we find Yeats attempting, by establishing a legendary aura about the play, to make it into "a quasi-mythological work."[394] In this context, the conflict between the two worlds in The Shadowy Waters as in Axël, on one plane, is the perpetual battle of the sexes and of all antithetical elements which sustain life in this world. On another level, the conflict resolves itself into the cosmic struggle between life and death. It is important to realize, however, that although both couples--Axël and Sara, Forgael and Dectora--embrace death, this conclusion should not, as we have seen in connection with Villiers's play and several of Yeats's other works, be taken as the simple and absolute dominion of death over life. In Axël and The Shadowy Waters the implication is that the hero and heroine have triumphed over both life and death and have moved on to a realm where neither is a relevant term. That their death is really a victory and not just a capitulation is suggested by the freedom with which their choice is made--a freedom emphasized by the fact that Axël, Sara, Forgael, and Dectora make their decision in the midst of plenty and surrounded by the happy revelry of Ukko's betrothal ceremony in one case and the sailors' victory celebration in the other.

In the war for possession of the hero, the battle grounds in both The Shadowy Waters and Axël are located in solitudes chosen by the heroes (the ship in the one and the castle in the other), solitudes cut off from the outside world by vast forces of an ambiguous nature (the western sea and the Black Forest). The ambiguity rests in the simultaneously protective and seductive powers of the sea and the forest. They provide protection because they isolate Forgael and Axël from the trivialities and distractions of everyday life in the world of common men and thus allow them to pursue the ideal unhindered. But they are also dangerously seductive. The forest hides the secret of the buried treasure and, like the sea, brings temptation in female form. Indeed, the sea, as Yeats notes in "A Symbolic Artist and the Coming of Symbolic Art," is "always, the flesh, 'the flood of the five senses'."[395] It is, as Yeats says in a note to The Wind Among the Reeds,

> a symbol of the drifting indefinite bitterness of life, and I believe there is like symbolism intended in the many Irish voyages to the islands of enchantment, or that there was, at any rate, in the mythology out of which these stories have been shaped. (Poems, 808)[396]

In his search for Tír-na-n-Og, for an "Eden out of time and out of space" (Poems, 218)[397] where he hopes to find the immutability of changeless passion (Poems, 231), Forgael has embarked on an *imran*, the "rowing about"[398] that is the Celtic equivalent to the alchemical *peregrinatio*.[399] Forgael is a soul in search of transformation through union with the ideal, with eternal love. The symbolism in the 1900 edition of the play emphasizes the alchemical nature of his quest: the sail of his ship has a pattern consisting of "Three rows of hounds, the first dark, the second red, and the third white with red ears" (Poems, 747); one of the sailors speaks of having seen "A red hound running from a silver arrow" (Poems, 747); later Dectora mentions that "The red hound is fled" (Poems, 761) and then exclaims, "O look!/A red-eared hound follows a hornless deer" (Poems, 764). The hounds of Forgael's sail, symbols as we have seen of longing and desire, are marked by the alchemical colours representing transmutation through progressive stages of purification and proximity to the ideal.[400]

We first encountered the hound chasing the hornless deer as an image of quenchless desire in "The Wanderings of Oisin." In "The Philosophy of Shelley's Poetry" Yeats refers to this image:

> [Shelley's] wolf and deer remind me of the hound and deer that Oisin saw in the Gaelic poem chasing one another on the water before he saw the young man following the woman with the golden apple; and of a Galway tale that tells how Niamh, whose name means brightness or beauty, came to Oisin as a deer; and of a vision that a friend of mine saw when gazing at a dark-blue curtain. I was with a number of Hermetists, and one of them said to another, 'Do you see something in the curtain?' The other gazed at the curtain for a while and saw presently a man led through a wood by a black hound, and then the hound lay dead at a place the seer knew was called, without knowing why, 'the Meeting of the Suns,' and the man followed a red hound, and then the red hound was pierced by a spear. A white fawn watched the man out of the wood, but he did not look at it, for a white hound came and he followed it trembling, but the seer knew that he would follow the fawn at last, and that it would lead him among the gods. The most learned of the Hermetists said, 'I cannot tell the meaning of the hounds or where the Meeting of the Suns is, but I think the fawn is the Morning and Evening Star.' I have little doubt that when the man saw the white fawn he was coming out of the darkness and passion of the world into some day of partial regeneration, and that it was the Morning Star and would be the Evening Star at its second coming.[401]

The hounds, then, symbolize the desire of Forgael for the ideal represented under the aspect of a woman (the "hornless deer" or virginal fawn seen as doe). Yeats himself says that "'The Deer with no Horns' and the 'Flying Fawn' are certainly Irish symbols of the desire of the man which is for the woman, and the desire of the woman which is for the desire of the man, as Coleridge said" (Poems, 843).[402]

An aristocrat like Axël[403] who has renounced the life of the world to pursue his ideal, Forgael is uninterested in human love, for he seeks "a beautiful, unheard-of kind/That is not in the world" (Poems, 228). He shares Axël's mistrust of physical love, believing that he who

> Loves in brief longing and deceiving hope
> And bodily tenderness . . . finds that even
> The bed of love, that in the imagination
> Had seemed to be the giver of all peace,
> Is no more than a wine-cup in the tasting,
> And as soon finished. (Poems, 228-29)

And yet, despite his resolve, Forgael is confronted with a mortal woman, not a divine one. Troubled by the seductive power of earthly love when face to face with Dectora, his first impulse nonetheless is to reject her as Axël rejects Sara:

> Why are you standing with your eyes upon me?
> You are not the world's core. O no, no, no!
> That cannot be the meaning of the birds.
> You are not its core. My teeth are in the world,
> But have not bitten yet. (Poems, 234-35)[404]

Later Forgael will accept that Dectora is his destiny, that they are taken like Sara and Axël in "the great golden net" (Poems, 238) of the gods, and, united with her, he will proceed towards the shadows "Where the world ends" (Poems, 227).[405]

Dectora resembles Sara. Like Sara and many of the images associated with transformation, she has a dual role. The life of the flesh incarnate, she represents the world of the senses. When Dectora insists "I am a woman, I die at every breath" (Poems, 250), she is asserting her ties with life and the flesh and establishing herself as Sara's counterpart: archetypal woman. One of the sailors in the 1900 edition recognizes this role. He comments that Dectora "will answer now like any waiting woman/Because these waters make all women one" (Poems, 757). Like Villiers, Yeats stresses the beauty and sensuality of his heroine by allusions to that traditional symbol of seductive femininity, her hair. This symbol is particularly obvious in the 1900 edition of the play (see Poems, 765-67), but is found throughout the many versions, for all end as Forgael is enveloped in the veil of Dectora's hair. The link between woman and the natural world of the senses is strengthened in The Shadowy Waters and Axël by her close association with a great treasure. In Yeats's play, the hold of Dectora's ship is laden with "the treasures of nine conquered nations" (Poems, 245), including valuable spices (see Poems, 232).[406]

Both the image of Dectora's hair and the treasure are associated with the dual nature of her role in the play. Her hair is "dull red" and she is dressed, appropriately, "in pale green, with copper ornaments on her dress, and has a copper crown upon her head" (Poems, 234 var., stage directions). Her colours, in other words, are both the colours of passion and fertility, of the flesh; and the colours of faery, of the spirit world. Dectora's treasure, like the one in Axël, represents not only materialism, but also spirituality. The presence of the spices helps to suggest this duality, for aside from their appeal to the senses (it is the beautiful aroma of the ambergris and sandalwood, opoponax and cinnamon that alerts Forgael's sailors to the approach of the ship), spices are valuable because of their role as preservatives: they are, albeit in a minor way, agents of immortality.[407]

It is fitting, of course, that there be more to Dectora than sensuality, for if there were not, she would not be a proper love match for Forgael, nor worthy to accompany him to Tír-na-n-Og. As a queen associated, indirectly perhaps, with the spiritual, she is an appropriate choice for the mystical union with the female principle that must precede Forgael's final transmutation. Like Sara, Dectora is linked with the mystic rose: in the 1900 edition she wears "a rose embroidered over her breast" (Poems, 754) and in the 1911 version her ship is sighted immediately after the speech in which Forgael mentions the sign of the rosy-cross: he tells Aibric of

> The red rose where the two shafts of the cross,
> Body and soul, waking and sleep, death, life,
> Whatever meaning ancient allegorists
> Have settled on, are mixed into one joy. (Plays, 323)

Moreover, like Villiers's heroine, Dectora has embarked on her own peregrinatio, figured as Forgael's is, under the Celtic imran. The spiritual aspect of her journey is stressed in the 1900 edition where she tells why she has undertaken the voyage:

> I and that mighty king a sudden blow
> And evil fortune have overthrown sailed hither
> Because I had hoped to come, as dreams foretold,
> Where gods are brooding in a mountainous place
> That murmurs with holy woods. . . . (Poems, 757)

Although Dectora herself does not at first realize it, Forgael recognizes that, like Sara following the star to Axël's castle,[408] Dectora has been lured by the supernatural to a predestined encounter with him:

> In the eyes of the gods,
> War-laden galleys, and armies on white roads,
> And forgotten names, and the cold stars
> That have built all are dust on a moth's wing.
> These are their lures, but they have set their hearts
> On tears and laughter; they have lured you hither
> And lured me hither, that you might be my love.
> Aengus looks on you when I look: he awaits
> Till his Edaine, no longer a golden fly
> Among the winds, looks under your pale eyelids. (Poems, 757)[409]

Dectora and Forgael are to be transformed into divine surrogates, into symbols, "mousetraps" for the gods of eternal love. This transformation is accomplished later in the play when Dectora falls in love with Forgael and is "caught in woven nets of enchantment" (Poems, 762). Forgael observes then that

> Aengus has seen
> His well-beloved through a mortal's eyes;
> And she, no longer blown among the winds,
> Is laughing through a mortal's eyes. (Poems, 763)

Despite her association with the transcendent, Dectora is not sufficiently purified to participate directly in the ideal: for her the temptation of the senses and the call of the world remain strong until the very end of the play. In the 1900 edition, the flag on her ship sports a raven, alchemical symbol of the nigredo, of the chaotic initial state of the process upon which all transformation is based.[410] Yeats describes the raven as symbolic of the worldly "desire and will of man."[411] The Dectora of the 1900 version is searching for the gods to "win their help/To conquer among the countries of the north".

(Poems, 757). Because of her worldly contamination, she has "found nothing but these empty waters" (Poems, 757) and has turned homeward. Just as Forgael needs completion through union with his predestined opposite in order to enter Tír-na-n-Og, so Dectora must also find her chosen companion before she can proceed to the land of the gods. Although she continues to argue in favour of life, in the end Dectora agrees to accompany Forgael to whatever fate awaits them; in fact, it is Dectora, not Forgael who initiates the fateful step that brings the final break with the world: in the 1900 edition, she herself cuts the rope that binds the two ships together, and in the 1906 version, she orders Aibric to do so.[412]

In the lines which Yeats tells Florence Farr contain the "one single idea" upon which the revised (1906) version of the play is based, Forgael offers an explanation of what he hopes to find in Tír-na-n-Og:

> Where the world ends
> The mind is made unchanging, for it finds
> Miracle, ecstasy, the impossible hope,
> The flagstone under all, the fire of fires,
> The roots of the world. (Poems, 227)[413]

What Forgael seeks, "the fire of fires," is the divine creative energy, that power which on one level is the life force of the universe (Dectora says Forgael will take her to "some island where the life of the world/Leaps upward, as if all the streams o' the world/Had run into one fountain" [Poems, 249]). On another level "the fire of fires" is the creativity of the imagination. As magical harpist, Forgael already participates to a certain extent in the latter. With the harp of Aengus[414] he is able to conjure "Strange creatures [which] flutter up before one's eyes,/Or cry about one's ears" (Poems, 222; see also 759) to make the veil of nature's temple tremble momentarily and suggest divine mysteries hidden behind it:

> I was sleeping up there by the bulwark, and when I woke in the sound of the harp a change came over my eyes, and I could see very strange things. The dead were floating upon the sea yet, and it seemed as if the life that went out of every one of them had turned to the shape of a man-headed bird--grey they were, and they rose up of a sudden and called out with voices like our own, and flew away singing to the west. Words like this they were singing: 'Happiness beyond measure, happiness where the sun dies.' (Plays, 319)

He is even able to invoke the gods:

> The other night, while he was playing it [his harp],
> A beautiful young man and girl came up
> In a white breaking wave; they had the look
> Of those that are alive for ever and ever. . . .
> 'Twas Aengus and Edain, the wandering lovers,
> To whom all lovers pray. (Poems, 223-24)

These powers belong to Forgael because he has "a Druid craft" (Poems, 237; Plays, 328), the skill of the artist who is able to transform the sorrows of reality into the beauties of a Druid dream. When he turns his artistic powers on Dectora, he casts an enchantment that transforms her from a self-possessed worldly queen, aloof, angry, and determined to revenge the murder of her husband, to a dreamy woman who has surrendered control over her mind and emotions, a woman in the crucible whom Forgael may mould as he pleases. James W. Flannery writes:

> under the spell of the harp she passes through a series of changes--first mourning the loss of her husband, then equating that loss with the sorrow of lovers throughout the ages, and finally coming to the realization of a love for Forgael that is commingled with the spirit of love itself, immortal and eternal.[415]

Forgael's creative powers are not perfect, however, for he is still of this world. His magic creates illusions, mere shadows which, like Edain, slip away when any attempt is made to grasp them (Poems, 223). As long as he remains part of this world, Forgael will be able to experience the divine directly only in brief moments of inspiration; the rest of the time he must be satisfied with suggestive symbols and visionary correspondences which are nonetheless important, for they direct his thoughts to the beyond:

> I can see nothing plain; all's mystery.
> Yet sometimes there's a torch inside my head
> That makes all clear, but when the light is gone
> I have but images, analogies,
> The mystic bread, the sacramental wine,
> The red rose where the two shafts of the cross,
> Body and soul, waking and sleep, death, life,
> Whatever meaning ancient allegorists
> Have settled on, are mixed into one joy.
> For what's the rose but that? miraculous cries,
> Old stories about mystic marriages,
> Impossible truths? But when the torch is lit
> All that is impossible is certain.
> I plunge in the abyss. (Plays, 323)

Forgael believes that he will find immortality in that abyss of the unknown,

> for they that promised to me love
> As those that can outlive the moon have known it,
> Had the world's total life gathered up, it seemed,
> Into their shining limbs. (Poems, 230-31)

He is convinced that he shall find an immortal love, "One of the Ever-living, as I think--/One of the Laughing People" (Poems, 231), and shall with her "Become one movement, energy, delight,/Until the over-burthened moon is dead" (Poems, 231). He will participate in that divine creative force that is "in the world's core" (Poems, 231).

On the other hand, Aibric (like Villiers's Ukko, a positive image of the life of this world of which Kaspar is the negative), fears that Forgael will find not immortal life, but death plain and simple, because the vision of the divine he seeks is impossible "While/We're in the body":

> None but the dead, or those that never lived,
> Can know that ecstasy. Forgael! Forgael!
> They have made you follow the man-headed birds,
> And you have told me that their journey lies
> Towards the country of the dead. (Poems, 230, 231)[416]

Aibric links the man-headed birds with death; Forgael associates them with the land of the Ever-living, that "country at the end of the world/ Where no child's born but to outlive the moon" (Poems, 247). Forgael recognizes that his pilot birds, being "but the colour of grey ash" (Poems, 247) are the souls of the dead who have not been completely purified of this world by the fire of death, but he understands that they have undergone the first transformation and are on the path to purification. They are in a state between the "corrupt" black raven and the completely pure white birds of Aengus. In the 1900 edition, the juxtaposing of the images suggests this quite clearly:

> Her raven flutters. Rob him of his food
> Or be his food, I follow the grey wings,
> And need no more of life till the white wings
> Of Aengus' birds gleam in their apple boughs. (Poems, 751)

Forgael also has a positive attitude towards the "teachers" (Poems, 231) who have beckoned him on his imran: they are the truthful Ever-living. To Aibric, however, they are the deceptive

> "Shape-changers, the Ever-laughing Ones,
> The Immortal Mockers." (Poems, 249)

They are leading Forgael astray with nothing "more than dreams,/More than the froth, the feather, the dust-whirl,/The crazy nothing" (Poems, 248) of shadows and illusions. They are, in other words, Aibric believes, casting on Forgael exactly the same kind of enchantment he practised on Dectora to win her love:

> They are besotting you as they besot
> The crazy herdsman that will tell his fellows
> That he has been all night upon the hills,
> Riding to hurley, or in the battle-host
> With the Ever-living. . . .
> . . . His wife knows better.
> Has she not seen him lying like a log,
> Or fumbling in a dream about the house?
> And if she hear him mutter of wild riders,
> She knows that it was but the cart-horse coughing
> That set him to the fancy. (Poems, 229-30)

That the Ever-living should engage in such deception is a natural enough conclusion to draw if "The things below are as the things above."[417] Forgael suggests they are when he compares himself and the love he longs for to the immortal lovers, Aengus and Edain. When he speaks of "the messengers and pilots" who are the guides to the beyond, he tells Dectora, "Our love shall be like theirs/When we have put their changeless image on" (Poems, 250).

The theme of deception involves consideration of the questions of freedom and necessity in the play.[418] Forgael has doubts about what he accomplishes with his magic powers, for he realizes that in casting an enchantment on Dectora he has not won her fairly, but through coercion. If the Ever-living have "besotted" him as Aibric suggests, then the same thing can be said about actions of the immortals. Forgael defends himself in two ways, stating first that he had no choice in what he did to Dectora because their union was predestined by the gods:

> Being driven on by voices and by dreams
> That were clear messages from the Ever-living,
> I have done right. What could I but obey? (Poems, 243)

Then he goes on to say that this is not only the will of the gods, but the way of the world:

> There is not one among you that made love
> By any other means. You call it passion,
> Consideration, generosity,
> But it was all deceit, and flattery
> To win a woman in her own despite,
> For love is war, and there is hatred in it. (Poems, 244)

Despite the fact that necessity, whether in the guise of fate or enchantment, may have been involved in the initial attraction of Forgael to the Ever-living and Dectora to Forgael, in the end they both choose, in freedom and full knowledge of the possible outcomes, to accept their destinies:

> Forgael. What matter
> If I am going to my death? --for there,
> Or somewhere, I shall find the love they have promised.
> That much is certain. (Poems, 231)

* * * * * * * *

> Dectora. What do I care,
> Now that my body has begun to dream,
> And you have grown to be a burning sod
> In the imagination and intellect?
> If something that's most fabulous were true--
> If you had taken me by magic spells,
> And killed a lover or husband at my feet--
> I would not let you speak, for I would know
> That it was yesterday and not to-day
> I loved him; I would cover up my ears,
> As I am doing now. (Poems, 245-46)

For Aibric, the world of the Ever-living, of the ideal, is but the shadowy twilight of insubstantial dream; whereas for Forgael, the dream is the reality that makes this world with its passion "As a lamp shadow--no--no lamp, the sun" (Poems, 229). The world of the

Ever-living is the reality of which this world is but a transitory mirror image:

> the dreams the Ever-living
> Breathe on the burnished mirror of the world
> And then smooth out with ivory hands and sigh,
> And find their laughter sweeter to the taste
> For that brief sighing. (Poems, 228)[419]

Although "microcosm, as world or man, mirrors macrocosm,"[420] it does so only imperfectly because it is "distorted images of themselves" that the gods cast "upon 'the vegetable glass of nature'."[421]

The transcendent seems shadowy to mortal senses because, being accustomed to the dim reflected light of this world, the senses are blinded by the true illumination of the other, the world where the light is so total there can be no shadows. The Ever-living for Forgael are not, then, the dim folk of the twilight, but the Tuatha De Danaan in their original capacity as powers of light, emanations of Villiers's "Lumière-incréée" (Axël, 196): as the Second Sailor observes in the 1911 version of The Shadowy Waters, the Ever-living "cast no shadow, having lived before the making of the earth" (Plays, 319).

Forgael desires to penetrate beyond the fragmentation and reflected images of this world to the unity underlying it.[422] The only way mortal man can approach "the source of original light"[423] is through the symbol, which, James Olney writes,

> mediates between the fragmented existence that we know in time and space and the unified existence of eternity, between consciousness and the unconscious, between the physical realm of objects and the intelligible realm of Forms.[424]

Symbols, the images and analogies that Forgael speaks of in the 1911 edition, come to the poet through inspiration and through the dreams "that hurry from beyond the world,"

All would be well
Could we but give us wholly to the dreams,
And get into their world that to the sense
Is shadow, and not linger wretchedly
Among substantial things; for it is dreams
That lift us to the flowing, changing world
That the heart longs for. (Poems, 230)

But, as Aibric says, such a transformation to the world of shadows that is paradoxically all light is impossible "While/We're in the body" (Poems, 230), and so Forgael and Dectora choose to leave life behind and "grow immortal" (Poems, 252) as dream incarnate: "dreams,/ That have had dreams for father, live in us" (Poems, 252).

United in love, like Axël and Sara, they sever the Uroboros, step out of the world of change and reincarnation in the serpent's mouth and into the mystic centre that is eternity:

The sword is in the rope--
The rope's in two--it falls into the sea,
It whirls into the foam. O ancient worm,
Dragon that loved the world and held us to it,
You are broken, you are broken. The world drifts away,
And I am left alone with my beloved,
Who cannot put me from his sight for ever. (Poems, 251)

Contained within this final speech by Dectora is that constant dialectic, the perpetual duel of opposites we have seen throughout Yeats's work in this period and will continue to observe in his later writings. Implicit in any dialectic or duel is the presupposition that there will be an eventual synthesis or resolution of the conflict. The following passage discussing the theme of The Shadowy Waters is an excellent analysis of the dialectic of the play, and the final harmony reached. It is particularly important, for with a few insignificant substitutions it might stand as an accurate description not only of this play, but also of a large portion of Yeats's other work and of much of Villiers's, including Axël. It is an unsigned programme note for the July 8, 1905 performance at the Court Theatre and is, according to Ellmann, "obviously by [Yeats's] hand":

> The main story expresses the desire for a perfect and eternal union that comes to all lovers, the desire of Love to "drown in its own shadow". But it has also other meanings. Forgael seeks death; Dectora has always sought life; and in some way the uniting of her vivid force with his abyss-seeking desire for the waters of Death makes a perfect humanity. Of course, in another sense, these two are simply man and woman, the reason and the will, as Swedenborg puts it.
>
> The second flaming up of the harp may mean the coming of a more supernatural passion, when Dectora accepts the death-desiring destiny. Yet in one sense, and precisely because she accepts it, this destiny is not death; for she, the living will, accompanies Forgael, the mind, through the gates of the unknown world. Perhaps it is a mystical interpretation of the resurrection of the body.[425]

What we have in The Shadowy Waters, then, is the germ of Yeats's theory of the "mask," the dialectic of self and anti-self and the ultimate union which is so well figured in "Among School Children":

> I dream of a Ledaean body, bent
> Above a sinking fire, a tale that she
> Told of a harsh reproof, or trivial event
> That changed some childish day to tragedy--
> Told, and it seemed that our two natures blent
> Into a sphere from youthful sympathy,
> Or else, to alter Plato's parable,
> Into the yolk and white of the one shell. (Poems, 443)

Yeats's dialectic is not Hegelian, for the synthesis involves a union of opposites in which neither is destroyed or negated. He himself explains that his is a dialectic of contraries, not negation: "the spring vegetables may be over, they have not been refuted. I am Blake's disciple, not Hegel's: 'contraries are positive. A negation is not a contrary'" (Poems, 835).[426] The one shell contains both yolk and white; Forgael and Dectora are the self and anti-self of The Shadowy

Waters and their union in the final life-in-death is that ultimate transformation which is the total self-possession Yeats and Villiers (via Aquinas) see as eternity.

CHAPTER THREE

THE ALCHEMICAL HOMUNCULUS: L'EVE FUTURE

Introduction

Until quite recently, critics have devoted surprisingly little attention to Villiers de l'Isle-Adam's novel, L'Eve future.[1] Although published in final form earlier than Axël, L'Eve future is in many respects the more modern of Villiers's two major works;[2] more than any of his other writings, it foreshadows the work of the futurists and surrealists.[3]

The novel is complex. As the dedication ("AUX REVEURS AUX RAILLEURS") suggests, in L'Eve future Villiers blends the two principle attitudes found throughout his work: idealism and mockery. This blending has, from the start, posed problems of interpretation for critics that have resulted, for instance, in totally opposite readings of Villiers's attitude to science.[4] In a discussion of the style in Villiers's "pseudo-scientific burlesques, and the kindred satires on ignorant and blatant mediocrity," Symons suggests one source of the difficulty in interpreting L'Eve future:

> In these wild and whirling satires, . . . we have a quite new variety of style, a style of patchwork and grimaces, a style under which the French language--the language of Bossuet and La Bruyère--almost collapses. Familiar words take new meanings, and flash through all the transformations of the pantomime before our eyes; strange words start up from forgotten corners; words and thoughts, never brought together since Babel, clash

> and stumble into a protesting combination; and in the very aspect of the page there is something startling. The absurdity of these things is so extreme, an absurdity so supremely serious, that we are carried almost beyond laughter, and in what is by virtue of its length the most important of the scientific burlesques, "L'Eve Future," it is almost impossible to tell whether the author is really in sober earnest or whether the whole thing is a colossal joke.[5]

In his later essay on Villiers in The Symbolist Movement in Literature, Symons elaborates further:

> [Villiers's satire] is not merely social satire, it is a satire on the material universe by one who believes in a spiritual universe. Thus it is the only laughter of our time which is fundamental, as fundamental as that of Swift or Rabelais. And this lacerating laughter of the idealist is never surer in its aim than when it turns the arms of science against itself, as in the vast buffoonery of L'Eve Future. A Parisian wit, sharpened to a fineness of irony such as only wit which is also philosophy can attain, brings in another method of attack; humour, which is almost English, another; while again satire becomes tragic, fantastic, macabre.[6]

Indeed, the thrust of Villiers's work is double-edged. In L'Eve future Villiers turns to science and scientific methods in an attempt to convince the positivist bourgeoisie of the existence of the supernatural.[7] In the same work, he mocks not only what E. de Rougemont describes as "la science à tendance positiviste et platement utilitaire, proposée comme panacée à tous les maux de l'intelligence et du corps";[8] but also, surprisingly, the artists and idealists who, divorcing themselves from the imperfections of the flesh, choose instead solipsism and artifice.

The writing of L'Eve future had been for Villiers like a descent into hell, as he confided to Rémy de Gourmont.[9] The self-proclaimed "Homère d'une Hélène électrique,"[10] Villiers was well aware both of the importance and complexity of the novel. In a letter to Jean Marras which Bollery dates February 5 or 6, 1879, Villiers discusses a book of fifty-two chapters and some 500-600 pages which must be L'Eve future:

> c'est une oeuvre dont l'apparition fera, je crois, sensation un peu au large, car, pour la première fois de ma vie, je n'y plaisante plus. . . .
>
> Tiens, écoute: c'est un livre vengeur, brillant, qui glace et qui force toutes les citadelles du Rêve!
>
> Jamais, jamais je ne me serais cru capable de tant de persévérance dans les analyses!--de tant d'homogénéité dans la composition, de tant d'imaginations étourdissantes, et dont, jusqu'à moi, personne, entends-tu, n'a osé les merveilleuses et nouvelles évocations. Tu peux me croire, c'est un incitateur et un tombeur. . . .
>
> --Au point de vue SUCCES, je le crois l'équivalent du Don Quichotte de Cervantès de Saavédra (à équivalence d'époque). . . .
>
> Quant au style, je le crois passable: jamais je n'ai écrit comme cela. J'y ai mis le temps et la patience. . . .
>
> . . . Il y a certaines analyses de l'entité bourgeoise qui pourront te faire jubiler. . . . --Mais il y a d'autres choses aussi... C'est compliqué.[11]

Those "other things" that Villiers hints at include alchemy and occultism, for L'Eve future is another manifestation of Villiers's interest in alchemy as a model of spiritual and creative transformation. In this novel he examines one particular aspect of alchemy in detail: the creation of the homunculus, the living work of art.

The Creation and Role of the Homunculus

The roles of Thomas Alva Edison, the "principal héros de ce livre" (L'Eve, 5) and of Hadaly his great Oeuvre, are central to the meaning of L'Eve future. If we come to the novel from such other works as Tribulat Bonhomet and the Contes cruels, we might expect Villiers to heap scorn on science and technology, but in L'Eve future we find the scientist an ally of "rêve" and the ideal. Deborah Conyngham points out that Villiers "n'est un critique assidu que de certaines espèces de science: celle des positivistes, par exemple."[12] Although this was not always so clearly the case, in the final version of the novel, Edison is far from being the ridiculous, mediocre, and humourless proponent of common sense and democratic positivism so hated by Villiers and immortalized by him in the character of Tribulat Bonhomet.[13]

Edison is, on the contrary, "un songeur," a genius with imagination and a finely honed wit and sense of humour which he does not mind turning even against himself.[14] He is an elitist who, like Axël, lives in aristocratic isolation in what amounts to a walled fortress.[15] Edison has so little concern for the general masses that he thinks nothing of sacrificing them in the hundreds merely to save a patent, to protect an idea.[16] He has no respect for the bourgeois but finds them dull-witted and unperceptive.[17]

Edison feels that most scientists, the so-called learned men of society, are no different from the bourgeoisie:

> Comment le monde a-t-il pu se passer du Phonographe jusqu'à moi? Je m'y perds. Les savants des nations oubliées ressemblaient donc aux nôtres, qui ne sont bons qu'à constater, le plus souvent, puis classer et perfectionner ce que les ignorants inventent et découvrent? (L'Eve, 41)

At best, scientists are tools of Villiers's constant enemy, the nineteenth-century god, progress. Book III, Chapter III, contains an interesting satire on this aspect of contemporary science. It is Edison himself who mounts the attack. In "L'Eden sous terre" that is the domain of Edison's greatest invention, Hadaly, a female android, Edison's friend, Lord Ewald, is greeted by an unusual concert: a flock of mechanical birds burst suddenly into human laughter. Edison explains:

> J'ai cru devoir substituer en eux la parole et le rire humains au chant démodé et sans signification de l'oiseau normal. Ce qui m'a paru plus d'accord avec l'esprit du Progrès. Les oiseaux réels redisent si mal ce qu'on leur apprend! Il m'a semblé plaisant de laisser saisir par le phonographe quelques phrases admiratives ou curieuses de mes visiteurs de hasard, puis de les transporter en ces oiseaux par voie d'électricité. (L'Eve, 187)

Through his birds, miniature "machines à gloire," Edison mocks not only the concept of progress and scientists who, like Tribulat Bonhomet, are its dupes, but also his own inventions:

> Alors, sur les versants en fleurs, une scène sabbatique, d'une absurdité à donner le vertige et qui présentait une sorte de caractère infernal, commença.
>
> D'affreuses voix de visiteurs quelconques s'échappaient, à la fois, du gosier de ces oiseaux: c'étaient des cris d'admiration, des questions banales ou saugrenues, --un bruit de gros applaudissements, même, d'assourdissants mouchoirs, d'offres d'argent. (L'Eve, 188)[18]

Edison is a scientist in the tradition of the ancient alchemists. His laboratory is "un lieu magique," a labyrinth (L'Eve, 104, 119) which serves as sanctuary for the lapis of the modern alchemist.[19] The labyrinth is a double emblem. It signifies, F.T. Flahiff writes, "the uncertain journey of man through the mazes of this world to the Celestial Jerusalem,"[20] to unity with the ideal. The labyrinth is also, as Stanislas Klossowski de Rola explains in Alchemy: The Secret Art, an emblem of the non-rational approach the alchemist takes to the Great Work:

> Like Theseus, the enquirer confronts the Labyrinth. This Labyrinth is a defiance of linear logic, which in this context is totally useless. The assault on the

> logical sense is made by the Minotaur of the absurd, who will promptly rout the would-be hero who cannot withstand his attack. Only through reliance on inspired intuition, the golden thread of Ariadne, will the puzzle fall into place and light replace darkness. Such methods, by which the limitations of the mind are bypassed or transcended, are used by the esoteric masters of many a spiritual discipline. Zen masters, for instance, use the koans, a kind of riddle, which, while unbalancing the intellect, may suddenly trigger satori or enlightenment.[21]

Edison does not consider himself an ordinary "savant" limited by "linear logic" or the restrictions of scientific method. He recognizes that intuition and chance play major roles in his discoveries: "La Science? --Je suis celui qui ne sait rien, qui devine parfois, qui trouve souvent, qui étonne toujours" (L'Eve, 55). He is, in other words, a combination of artist and magus. A "demi-dieu" (L'Eve, 397) who, like Janus, is in but not of the world,[22] Edison is attended by "cinq acolytes, ses chefs d'atelier" (L'Eve, 12). Much like Yeats's artists and visionaries, the "Magicien du siècle," the "Sorcier de Menlo Park" receives inspiration in twilight moments in which he is both awake and asleep: "Je travaille toujours, même en dormant, --même en rêvant! Je suis une sorte de Dormeur éveillé, comme dirait Shéhérazade" (L'Eve, 5, 6, 52).

In the opening chapter of the novel, Villiers presents an interesting image of this twilight state--an image that reappears throughout the work at significant moments. When we first meet Edison, it is in his laboratory at sunset; he is smoking a cigar which in the context stands as a substitute for an opium pipe. Villiers suggests this by the dreamy atmosphere in the twilit laboratory, fragrant with the odour of dried plants; by the reference to "les lourdes et capiteuses fleurs d'Asie" which are doubtlessly poppies; and by the statement that

Edison does not often smoke, "le tabac changeant en rêveries les projets virils" (L'Eve, 13, 12).

The cigar/opium motif recurs with the entry of Lord Ewald. When this Englishman, depressed and on the verge of suicide, first appears in Edison's laboratory, he carries a cigar which has gone out, extinguished like his hopes and dreams for a beautiful life with his mistress Alicia (L'Eve, 50). When he begins to relate the story of his tragic love, Ewald lights another cigar which is brought to our attention later while he and Edison are discussing the seemingly fantastic possibility of transforming the android, Hadaly, into the living double of Alicia (L'Eve, 54, 141). Still later, when the two men are preparing to descend into the ancient burial vaults beneath Edison's laboratory, they light cigars (L'Eve, 175, 177), then proceed down into Hadaly's magic domain.

Here, in "L'Eden sous terre," we are reminded once again of the cigars, when Edison relights his "au coeur de feu d'un camélia rose" and informs Ewald that he may do the same with a spark from the soul of the nightingale whose beautiful song he has just heard (L'Eve, 191). Edison has recorded the bird's song, which is played on a phonograph in his house in New York and transmitted by telephone to Menlo Park. The telephone receiver is located in the heart of an artificial orchid. Edison tells Ewald, "j'ai cliché cette âme [du rossignol]. . . . Je l'évoque par l'électricité: c'est du spiritisme sérieux cela" (L'Eve, 191).

Although Edison is being rather flippant here about the spirit world, it is clear that, unlike the positivist, Edison does recognize the existence of the inexplicable, the mysterious, the spiritual.[23] Speaking about the great work he has accomplished in the construction of Hadaly, Edison tells Lord Ewald:

> si j'ai fourni physiquement ce qu'elle a de terrestre et d'illusoire, une Ame qui m'est inconnue s'est superposée à mon oeuvre et, s'y incorporant à jamais, a reglé, croyez-moi, les moindres détails de ces scènes effrayantes et douces avec un art si subtil qu'il passe, en vérité, l'imagination de l'homme.
>
> Un être d'outre-Humanité s'est suggéré en cette nouvelle oeuvre d'art où se centralise, irrévocable, un mystère inimaginé jusqu'à nous. (L'Eve, 418)

Edison is not quite accurate when he says that the mystery has been unimagined till then. The automaton is an ancient concept dating back at least forty centuries to the articulated statues of antiquity, "façonnées non par divertissement," according to Eliane Maingot, "mais dans un dessein religieux."[24] Maingot discusses this religious purpose briefly:

> C'est en Orient que naquit la croyance selon laquelle les hommes, en construisant des êtres à leur image, avaient une chance de découvrir quelques-uns des secrets de la vie. Mais, ainsi qu'en témoigne la tête de chacal (dieu Anubis) à la mâchoire mobile, qui appartient au musée du Louvre, c'est d'Egypte que nous viennent à ce sujet les documents les plus anciens: la statue d'un dieu ou d'un mort, par le fait magique de la représentation, était censée posséder les pouvoirs de celui dont elle était l'image, après que les prêtres y avaient fait entrer l'âme divine, le "Ka," grâce à certaines formules et opérations magiques, dont ils étaient les seuls à connaître le secret. La statue rendue ainsi "vivante" était interrogée dans les cérémonies, et par des artifices très simples rendait des oracles et répondait aux questions des non-initiés. La conviction des anciens Egyptiens de la vie des statues explique également le fait que quantité de statuettes articulées et mobiles--et même de jouet grossièrement façonnés--aient été découvertes dans des tombeaux, au cours de fouilles. Chargées de pouvoirs magiques, en général finement sculptées et peintes, ces figurines représentent les serviteurs du défunt et sont prêtes à s'animer selon les

> désirs de leur maître, que l'au-delà, ainsi qu'il convient, a accueilli avec tous les attributs de sa vie terrestre.[25]

Although it appears that at one time or another almost all peoples believed in the power of the animated statue, gradually the religious element was replaced by a scientific interest. The entertainment value of the statue began to dominate as the technology improved, artificial reproduction of movement grew more sophisticated, and the mechanical automaton appeared.[26]

For one group of people, however, the question of animating the inanimate remained crucial. When Edison begins to explain the workings of his android, Ewald is quick to identify him with this group: "il me semble que je me trouve chez Flamel, Paracelse ou Raymond Lulle, au temps des magistes et des souffleurs du moyen âge" (L'Eve, 123).[27] Edison tells Ewald, "je prétends pouvoir . . . faire sortir du limon de l'actuelle Science-Humaine un Etre fait à notre image, et qui nous sera, par conséquent, CE QUE NOUS SOMMES A DIEU" (L'Eve, 127). Since the alchemists dreamt of imitating the divine creative processes by producing life through artificial means, the construction of Edison's android is, in V.-E. Michelet's words, "une forme du Grand-Oeuvre, une adaptation de l'homuncule" sought by the alchemists.[28]

The "enfant royal plus parfait que ses parents,"[29] the homunculus is the hermaphroditic product of the "chymical wedding" of the sacred brother and sister, the male and female principles that are united by the "principe de liaison." In L'Eve future, the three constituent principles of the android/homunculus, Hadaly, function on two separate planes: the physical, and the psychic. Only if the "chymical wedding" takes place on both planes will the attempt to animate the homunculus be successful.

On the physical level, Edison's android consists of four different parts or layers:

> 1° Le Système vivant, intérieur, qui comprend l'Equilibre, la Démarche, la Voix, le Geste, les Sens, les Expressions-futures du visage, le Mouvement-régulateur intime, ou, pour mieux dire, "l'Ame."
> 2° Le Médiateur plastique, c'est-à-dire l'enveloppe métallique, isolée de l'Epiderme et de la Carnation, sorte d'armure aux articulations flexibles en laquelle le système intérieur est solidement fixé.
> 3° La Carnation (ou chair factice proprement dite) superposée au Médiateur et adhérente à lui, qui, --pénétrante et pénétrée par le fluide animant, --comprend les Traits et les Lignes du corps-imité, avec l'émanation particulière et personnelle du corps reproduit, les repoussés de l'Ossature, les reliefs-Veineux, la Musculature, la Sexualité du modèle, toutes les proportions du corps, etc.
> 4° L'Epiderme ou peau-humaine, qui comprend et comporte le Teint, la Porosité, les Linéaments, l'éclat du Sourire, les Plissements insensibles de l'Expression, le précis mouvement labial des paroles, la Chevelure et tout le Système-pileux, l'Ensemble-oculaire, avec l'individualité du Regard, les Systèmes dentaires et ungulaires. (*L'Eve*, 249-50)

Physically, Hadaly is a construct of metals, crystals, rose oil, and other natural elements, especially "les plus rares et les plus précieuses, ce que fait l'éloge du sexe enchanteur" (*L'Eve*, 159). This is the feminine aspect of her androgynous nature. She is assembled and operated by her masculine component, scientific principles. These include, among many others, "une action photochronique" which is used to reproduce exact flesh tones (*L'Eve*, 121).[30]

Edison tells Ewald that there is no point to his trying to explain to him the composition of Hadaly's flesh,

> attendu que la presse hydraulique, en les coagulant d'une façon homogène (comme la Vie pétrit les éléments de notre chair), a littéralement transfiguré leur individualité en une synthèse qui ne s'analyse pas, mais qui se ressent. (L'Eve, 291; first emphasis mine)

Edison does, nonetheless, analyze a good many of Hadaly's other components in detail. Given what we have seen of the significance of hermaphroditic Mercurius to the alchemical process, it is not surprising that in L'Eve future one of the most important of the raw materials of Edison's android is the metallic element mercury. Quick silver is Hadaly's physical core. It maintains her balance and allows her to walk gracefully and naturally. Even more important, it is her marrow, the "tissue" which controls her life-force--"ce surprenant agent vital que nous appelons l'Electricité"--by regulating the flow of electrical impulses from her "heart," her inner "appareil dynamo-électrique" (L'Eve, 121, 271).[31]

It is probable that Villiers's interest in electricity in this particular context was roused by Eliphas Lévi, for among the traditional means Lévi lists for creating an android is "le mécanisme galvanisé."[32] Indeed, Lévi attributes to electricity a central role in the alchemical process. Basing his theory on readings in the Qabalah, Lévi moves from the concept of the divine Word as Being and Creativity to that of Light as the manifestation of this divine Word, as it were "le corps de Dieu . . . [et] l'instrument du Verbe, . . . l'écriture blanche de Dieu sur le grand livre de la nuit."[33] Light in its most dynamic aspect or electricity, Lévi concludes, is the active agent in alchemical transmutation. In alchemy,

> 1° Les quatre fluides impondérables ne sont que les manifestations diverses d'un même agent universel qui est la lumière.
> 2° La lumière est le feu qui sert au grand oeuvre sous forme d'électricité.
> 3° La volonté humaine dirige la lumière vitale au moyen de l'appareil nerveux. Cela s'appelle de nos jours magnétiser.
> 4° L'agent secret du grand oeuvre, l'azoth des sages, l'or vivant et vivifiant des philosophes, l'agent producteur métallique universel, c'est l'ELECTRICITE MAGNETISEE.[34]

Piobb writes that the alchemist's azoth is the manifestation of energy which, as fire, is the agent of the soul's purification. It is associated with the astrological sign of Leo, symbolic of solar intelligence.[35] He continues:

> Or, l'Azoth exprime l'Androgyne, c'est dire que le déploiement de la force vitale dans un être se compose d'un principe masculin--actif ou positif--et d'un principe féminin--passif ou négatif. Si l'on pense qu'entre ces deux principes il y a toujours un "médiateur plastique," implicitement envisagé, on a quelque chose dans le genre d'une pile électrique où existent un pôle positif et un pôle négatif.[36]

Jollivet-Castelot develops this thought further. The whole of existence is based on the trilogy of "Force [positive], Energie [neutre], Matière [négative]" or "Intelligence-Energie-Matière."[37] When united, these three "se résolvent en la Substance qui est le Tout, Neutre par excellence, Brahman, Principe absolu."[38]

Given the modern atomic theory that matter is composed of atoms which in turn consist of protons (positive charges), electrons (negative charges) and neutrons (neutral charges), the electrical explanation of alchemy is not as farfetched as it might at first seem. In the context of L'Eve future, Hadaly is the "Neutre par excellence," the hermaphroditic end product,[39] the synthesis that incorporates (without negating) the antinomies which on the physical plane are, on the one hand, masculine "force" or intelligence, the (positive) immaterial principle represented by science and the original idea born in Edison's mind;[40] and, on the other hand, its contrary--feminine "matière," the (negative) physical principle, represented by the precious materials of which Hadaly is constructed and, as we shall see shortly, by art and the statuesque beauty of the living woman on whom Hadaly is eventually modelled.[41] The neutral component, the "médiateur plastique" which serves as "la miraculeuse catalyse,"[42] is literally "l'énergie," represented by electricity and by Edison himself as the incarnation of the creative fire ("je m'appelle l'Electricité" [L'Eve, 148]).[43]

In the opening pages of L'Eve future, Edison, "l'homme qui a fait prisonnier l'écho," jokingly wonders whether or not the world would have been different had the Creator, rather than confining his communication with the generations to the limits of toneless words on a page, instead left to posterity the very sound of his voice, preserved and reproduced by Edison's phonograph in a "cliché galvanoplastique" (L'Eve, 11, 16). "Il est à remarquer," Edison comments,

> que le Verbe divin semble avoir fait peu d'état des côtés extérieurs et sensibles de l'écriture et de la parole. Il n'écrivit qu'une seule fois--et, encore, sur la terre. Sans doute n'estimait-il, dans la vibration du mot, que cet insaisissable au delà, dont le magnétisme inspiré de la Foi peut pénétrer un vocable dans l'instant où on le profère. Qui sait si le reste n'est pas de peu d'importance, en effet?... Toujours est-il qu'il a permis seulement qu'on imprimât son Evangile, et non qu'on le phonographiât. Cependant, au lieu de dire: "Lisez les Saintes Ecritures!" on eût dit: "Ecoutez les Vibrations Sacrées!" (L'Eve, 26)[44]

Edison realizes that such speculations must, of course, remain mere whimsy, for "il est trop tard...," the moment is long past when "le

Croissez et multipliez" or even the later "*Mélopées des Sybilles*" might have been captured "d'une manière indélébile, en de sonores archives de cuivre: de sorte qu'ultérieurement le doute n'eût jamais été possible de leur authenticité" (*L'Eve*, 26, 17).

But if it is too late for Edison to render service to the divine Word--for "C'est surtout dans le Monde mystique . . . que les occasions perdues semblent irréparable!" (*L'Eve*, 25)--there is still time for him to assist in the promulgation and preservation of its earthly image: the sounds of human art. The android's speech will consist of the poetry and song of the great artists of all time, "inscrits sur les feuilles des deux phonographes d'or . . . qui sont les poumons de Hadaly" (*L'Eve*, 158). It is electricity that will activate the Word in its generated form: "Ces poumons, l'étincelle les met en mouvement comme l'étincelle de la Vie met en mouvement les nôtres" (*L'Eve*, 158).

Mesmeric magnetism corresponds on the psychic level to electricity on the physical. Edison says that the two elements essential to the successful completion of his Great Work are "l'Electro-magnétisme et la Matière-radiante" (*L'Eve*, 129). The latter is the "fourth" state of matter which William Crookes claimed to have discovered. It is the medium through which the "*Force psychique*" or "force projective de soi-même"[45] functions. Edison describes radiant matter as

> un fluide . . . mixte, synthèse de l'électrique et du nerveux, tenant à la fois de celui qui fait mouvoir, vers le pôle nord, la pointe de toute aiguille aimantée et de celui qui fascine l'oiseau placé sous le battement d'ailes de l'épervier. (*L'Eve*, 413-14)

Occultists believe that man participates in the divine light through his astral body, the aura of which may be observed as the "odic light" which emanates from all natural phenomena and which may on occasion be captured on photographic film.[46] Drawing from Lévi, Jollivet-Castelot sums up the significance of the astral light from the alchemist's point of view:

> la lumière astrale se rattache de très près à la conception du Mercure des [Philosophes] des alchimistes Kabbalistiques, de la Matière Radiante des chimistes et de l'Ether des Physiciens.
>
> La Lumière Astrale est l'Agent Universel, le Médiateur Plastique universel, le réceptacle commun des vibrations, du Mouvement et des images de la Forme (Maya).
>
> Cet Agent universel, c'est l'Od des Hébreux et du chevalier de Reichenbach, c'est la lumière astrale des Martinistes; l'usage, le maniement de cette force constitue le Grand Arcane de la Magie Pratique.
>
> "La lumière astrale aimante, échauffe, éclaire, magnétise, attire, repousse, vivifie, détruit, coagule, sépare, brise, rassemble toutes choses sous l'impulsion de volontés puissantes."[47]

In Hadaly's case, the radiant matter brings to her the psyche known as Sowana. The projection of an occult personality liberated by Edison from the subconscious of his friend Annie Anderson by means of hypnosis,[48] Sowana, like Hadaly with whom she "incorporates" herself, is androgynous. Influenced by Edison's masculine will, Annie's simple feminine intelligence is transformed into a new duality, a mysterious spiritual and intellectual beauty that even Edison does not understand:

> l'être moral qui m'apparaît en mistress Anderson, à l'état de veille, et celui qui m'apparaît, dans la profondeur magnétique, semblent absolument différents. Au lieu de la femme très simple, si digne, si intelligente, même, --mais, de vues, après tout, fort limitées, --que je connais en elle, --voici qu'au souffle de ce sommeil il s'en révèle une tout autre, multiple et inconnue! Voici que le vaste savoir, l'éloquence étrange, l'idéalité pénétrante de cette endormie nommée Sowana--qui, au physique, est la même femme--sont choses logiquement inexplicables! Cette dualité n'est-elle pas un phénomène stupéfiant? (L'Eve, 408)

Sowana is a twilight being who lives in a state intermediary between waking and sleeping, an "état mixte et merveilleux" (L'Eve, 22) appropriate to her nature. This, then, is the psychic force that, "DE SON ETAT 'SURNATUREL'" (L'Eve, 409), animates Hadaly. Raitt writes that in accepting Sowana's help, Edison "ajoute à son automate mécanique une force mystérieuse et incalculable,"[49] for as Edison himself admits, "si je connais mistress Anderson, je vous atteste QUE JE NE CONNAIS PAS SOWANA!" (L'Eve, 410). It is the presence of this mysterious psychic element in Hadaly that, according to Gustave Kahn, elevates L'Eve future above all other works of its type and earns it the epithet of "le plus considérable roman qui ait été écrit sur l'automate."[50]

Eliphas Lévi says that the real android of the ancient alchemists cannot be explained in any of the manners traditionally offered. It was neither the vivification of the mandrake root, nor the monstrous offspring of bestiality, nor even the galvanized automaton, but "l'extension de la volonté du mage dans un autre corps, organisé et servi par un esprit élémentaire; en d'autres termes plus modernes et plus intelligibles, c'était un sujet magnétique."[51] Raitt quotes this passage from Lévi and concludes that it describes "précisément la méthode d'Edison."[52] The production of Hadaly is somewhat more complicated, however.

As an artificial construct, a galvanized automaton, Hadaly cannot be a true "magnetized" subject--this is the role of Annie Anderson. In fact, Annie, possessed of a dual personality, is both subject and, as Sowana, the projecting magus. Although Sowana is not herself an elemental spirit, she is a spiritualistic medium serving as "l'envoyé" (L'Eve, 383) of even more occult beings who remain a mystery but are perhaps elemental spirits.[53] Despite the fact that Edison says his android "ne revêt personne, dans le sens ordinaire du mot," Sowana talks of Hadaly as a being separate from herself, one who speaks on her own (L'Eve, 118, 23). Conyngham writes that

> Sowana n'est pas le véritable secret de Hadaly, car elle est encore un masque employé par d'autres êtres pour faire sentir leur présence dans le monde physique. . . . Sowana parle des êtres occultes comme d'êtres encore lointains, mais qui veulent s'approcher de ce monde. Au fur et à mesure que Hadaly se démasque, nous ressentons de plus en plus leur présence. Sowana vient de leur part: elle est leur envoyé.[54]

When Hadaly and Ewald meet alone in the grounds of Menlo Park, they converse freely under conditions that preclude any influence from either Edison or Annie.[55] As Raitt notes, "l'Andréïde est douée d'une vie autonome, entièrement indépendante de son créateur."[56] It is the occult world that is in control not only of the android, but also of those who have created it: Hadaly tells Ewald,

> Je m'appelais en la pensée de qui me créait, de sorte qu'en croyant seulement agir de lui-même il m'obéissait aussi obscurément. Ainsi, me suggérant, par son entremise, dans le monde sensible, je me suis saisie de tous les objets qui m'ont semblé le mieux appropriés au dessein de te ravir. (L'Eve, 383)

In other words, it is not just Annie who is the subject of magnetism, but also Edison and Ewald, who have been subjected to the will of the beyond.[57]

Before studying the role of the occult in more detail, we should look at another aspect of Annie Anderson's contribution to the construction of Hadaly. Before Lord Ewald appeared on the scene, Edison and Sowana together had created an hermaphroditic android, "UNE dualité" (L'Eve, 23) in which their two wills were united. But Hadaly remained the alchemical lapis in potential only, a "diamant brut" (L'Eve, 122-23) awaiting Ewald before it could be cut and polished, actualized as the perfected lapis which would be both the transformed and the transformer.[58] Annie Anderson is the "jeweler" who will cut the rough stone. Using "la Photosculpture" she will effect a perfect "transposition d'aspect" by transforming "l'ébauche," the still vaguely formed and featureless android, into an all but completed work of art (L'Eve, 294). The final touches, as we might expect from Villiers, will be applied by a man, "Un grand artiste" to whom, Edison says, "j'ai communiqué l'enthousiasme pour l'art spécial de réviser mes fantômes" (L'Eve, 295). In her artistic role, as in her spiritual role, Annie/Sowana serves as intermediary for a greater power, for Annie is a studio artist, a technician and skilled craftswoman, but not an imaginative artistic genius. She requires the assistance of a model and the creativity of one whose thirst for perfection is so great he is ready to renounce life. Both of these Lord Ewald provides, being the "troisième vivant" necessary "pour que ce Grand Oeuvre s'accomplisse" (L'Eve, 23).

Ewald introduces Edison to his mistress, the exquisitely beautiful actress, Alicia Clary, and offers her as a model for Hadaly. A living work of art, Alicia is "la splendeur de la Vénus victrix humanisée" (L'Eve, 59) but, unfortunately, there is a disparity between her exterior beauty and the mind and soul which it masks, a "non-correspondance du physique et de l'intellectuel" (L'Eve, 73).

Alicia has "rachitisme intellectuel"; she is "une Déesse bourgeoise" cursed by mediocrity (L'Eve, 84, 73). The epitome in spirit of her century and upstart class (her family has but recently been raised to the nobility), Alicia, with her beautiful body betrayed by her inner vulgarity, is "un temple profané," "le carrefour où toutes les chimères de ce faux Sens-commun, dont nous [Ewald et Edison] venons de dégonfler la morne suffisance, tiennent, gravement, leur oiseux conseil" (L'Eve, 87, 83).

Ewald, an aristocratic idealist like all Villiers's sympathetic heroes, has been driven to despair because, although he recognizes Alicia's failings, he is unable to free himself from her spell: "les liens de la Beauté sont forts et sombres" (L'Eve, 77). When Edison asks him why he still loves Alicia, knowing what he does of her, Ewald replies, "parce que le réveil n'entraîne pas toujours l'oubli du rêve et que l'Homme s'enchaîne avec sa propre imagination!" (L'Eve, 77).

True beauty requires a complete unity of body and soul, but the discrepancy within Alicia makes her a "dualité animée" (L'Eve, 93). We have seen that Hadaly and Sowana are also dualities, but in the case of Alicia it is the division within that dominates, not the unity implied in "UNE dualité." As a result, Alicia simultaneously attracts and repels Ewald, binding him to her in fascination "comme les deux pôles de cet aimant attachent à lui, par leur contradiction, ce morceau de fer" (L'Eve, 93). Being among those who give their love but once in a lifetime, Ewald has determined to commit suicide in order to escape Alicia's power over him. He fears that he has been contaminated by her and is, therefore, himself guilty of "un acte d'abaissement presque indélébile en possédant cette femme" (L'Eve, 347). Ewald hopes to redeem himself by "une sorte de mort purificatrice" (L'Eve, 347); he is ready to undertake the first alchemical operation: the death of the profane in calcination.

Edison understands Ewald's problem with Alicia because he himself has made a close study of another woman who was also a duality, an "être hybride" (L'Eve, 241): Evelyn Habal, the dancer who some years before had cast an enchantment on Annie Anderson's husband, Edward. Although he had not been as conscious as Ewald is of the reasons for his actions, Anderson, like Ewald, had been simultaneously drawn towards and repulsed by the "sorcière" (L'Eve, 231) who held him in her thrall.[59] Evelyn was a modern incarnation of "l'antique Circé," who, Hadaly warns Ewald, lies sleeping in the "sens terrestres" (L'Eve, 386; see also 226). Evelyn belonged to "Ces femmes neutres dont toute la 'pensée' commence et finit à la ceinture" (L'Eve, 220).[60] Such women consciously subject their victims to degenerative transformation, to

> la simple régression vers les plus sordides sphères de l'Instinct et l'obscurcissement d'âme définitif de celui... qu'elle ne tentait qu'afin de pouvoir en contempler, un jour, d'un air d'infatuée satisfaction, la déchéance, les tristesses et la mort. (L'Eve, 218-19)

Anderson had been ruined and driven to suicide when he had fallen under the spell of Evelyn, whom Edison describes as a Stymphalide, a vampire woman, and a human equivalent to the seductively beautiful but poisonous upas tree.[61] Evelyn, whose red hair in this case is a mark of demonic influence, shares the negative but not the positive features of the life-sapping "malignant phantom," the Leanhaun Shee.[62]

Women of Evelyn's sort "peuvent glisser inaperçues, et même en laissant un souvenir agréable, entre les bras de mille passagers insoucieux dont le caprice les effleure" (L'Eve, 218). For the majority of men, they will simply be "jouets sans conséquences" because these men are much like them: decadent creatures "aux sens léprosés et plus qu'avilis" interested only in the physical, in the animal side of man (L'Eve, 219, 214). The vampire women, like the Leanhaun Shee, are only attracted to, and fatal for, men of a special type, "des hommes d'une rare et droite nature" (L'Eve, 216) who seek to elevate themselves above their animal nature. The success of their seduction depends on two things: "le principe lumineux de l'attraction des contraires" and the monistic principle that "en tout homme dorment, virtuels, tous les salissants désirs que couvent les fumées du sang et de la chair!" (L'Eve, 215, 218). Edward Anderson succumbed to Evelyn Habal because his character and qualities, "des plus simples, des plus primitifs, des plus naturels, . . . été stérilisés et corrodés . . . par l'envoûtement de leurs inverses" (L'Eve, 215).[63] His corruption was possible because "le germe en était dans son coeur comme en des limbes" (L'Eve, 218). Degenerative transformation, just like its contrary, transmutation of base metal into gold, of physical into spiritual, requires both the conjunction of opposites and the presence in potential of the end product.

Although Edison admits that Anderson must bear some of the blame for his own destruction, he nonetheless reserves his condemnation for Evelyn, "l'être pestilent dont la fonction fut d'en faire éclore, savamment, l'hydre aux mille têtes" (L'Eve, 218). She was not an

> Eve ingénue que l'amour, --fatal, sans doute! --mais, enfin, que l'amour égara vers cette Tentation qui, pensait-elle, devait grandir jusqu'à l'état divin son compagnon de paradis! (*L'Eve*, 218)

On the contrary, Evelyn entered Anderson's Eden as an "intruse consciente" determined to employ

> des plus captieux, des plus paradoxaux, des plus anti-intellectuels moyens séductifs pour intoxiquer peu à peu de leur *charme mensonger* le point faible d'un coeur intègre et pur jusqu'à leur survenance maudite. (*L'Eve*, 218; emphasis mine)

Evelyn's "charme mensonger" resembled that of her "correspondance . . . dans le monde *végétal*," the upas tree which presents an illusory and lethal appearance of beauty:

> Il apparaît, très doré par le soleil. Son ombre, vous le savez, engourdit, enivre d'hallucinations fiévreuses et, si l'on s'attarde sous son influence, elle devient mortelle.
>
> Donc, la beauté de l'arbre doit être *empruntée* et *surajoutée* à lui-même. (*L'Eve*, 226)[64]

Edison employs an interesting medium for demonstrating the fatal illusion of beauty that Evelyn had created: he shows Ewald two movies of the seductress, with sound tracks! In the first movie, a beautiful young woman dances and sings. This is the Evelyn that the world saw. She is, however, "une morne chimère" (*L'Eve*, 241) masking the true Evelyn revealed in the second movie:

> l'apparition d'un petit être exsangue, vaguement féminin, aux membres rabougris, aux joues creuses, à la bouche édentée et presque sans lèvres, au crâne à peu près chauve, aux yeux ternes et en vrille, aux paupières flasques, à la personne ridée, toute maigre et sombre. (*L'Eve*, 231)

With her "doigts de fées" and the beautician's artifice (wigs, false teeth, cosmetics, strategic padding) Evelyn had transformed herself from an ugly and "aging" woman of thirty-four[65] into an attractive "adolescente" (L'Eve, 232, 202). Like Edison, Evelyn (whom Anderson first met, appropriately, at a production of Gounod's Faust) was an alchemist of sorts. In her "laboratoire de toilette" (L'Eve, 242) she had succeeded in creating an homunculus--in this case, a false image of beauty: herself. Evelyn seemed to be, Edison says, "l'Artificiel illusoirement vivant" (L'Eve, 241). He concludes that "si l'Artificiel assimilé, amalgamé plutôt, à l'être humain," can produce such disasters as befell Edward Anderson, then

> puisque par suite, à tel ou tel degré, physique ou moral, toute femme qui les cause tient plus ou moins d'une andréide, --eh bien! chimère pour chimère, pourquoi pas l'Andréide elle-même? (L'Eve, 242)

Edison's suggestion makes eminent good sense given the attitude he and Ewald take to all women, not just to the consciously evil ones like Evelyn and the unconsciously mediocre ones like Alicia. Ewald is disillusioned with Alicia, not merely because of the discrepancy between her body and soul, but because he is unable to control her and shape her to his will. Both he and Edison have very low opinions of women, even the "good" ones like Annie Anderson. They view them as objects, as dolls to be manipulated and moulded by men.[66]

Annie as magnetized subject is a positive image of the dominance of male will over female. However beneficial the effects of the hypnosis may in many respects be, Annie is, nonetheless, subject to the projection of Edison's will. Ewald recognizes that, far from being cured of the enervating depression and sleeping sickness that overtook her after the tragic ruin and death of her husband, Annie has simply had her catatonic state redirected. When Edison says, "je finis par me préoccuper de guérir, s'il était possible, le mal singulier de mistress Any Anderson," Ewald murmurs, "--Guérir? . . . --transfigurer, plutôt! n'est-ce pas?" (L'Eve, 405). The result for Annie is that she adopts a passive role in life: she prefers existence in her twilight hypnotic state as Sowana, to that in the sorrowful world of Annie Anderson's reality.[67]

Flighty and unstable creatures without a conscience, women are, Edison and Ewald feel, highly susceptible to suggestion and conform themselves willingly to the spirit of whichever man attracts them at the moment:

> Une femme! N'est-ce pas une enfant troublée de mille inquiétudes, sujette à toutes influences? Ne devons-nous pas accueillir toujours avec l'indulgence la plus amie de notre meilleur sourire les semblants de ses tendances fantasques, les inconstances de ses goûts pour une ombre aussi changeante que le chatoiement d'un plumage? Cette instabilité fait partie du charme féminin. Une joie naturelle doit nous porter, au contraire, à doucement reprendre, à transfigurer par mille transitions lentes--et dont elle nous aime davantage, les devinant, --à guider, enfin, un être frêle, irresponsable et délicat qui, de lui-même et par instinct, demande appui. (L'Eve, 60-61; see also 169-71)

Ewald had hoped that through love he would be able to transform Alicia by modifying her thoughts so that they would reflect his own.[68] He discovered, however, that this was impossible, that any modifications of Alicia's thoughts and behaviour would be merely cosmetic and would not be internalized, because her soul, the "fond indélébile" (L'Eve, 61) that ultimately determines the character of her ideas and what they may reflect, simply does not contain the potential for the radical change needed. There is no alchemical gold buried within Alicia merely awaiting discovery.

Even if Alicia's beautiful exterior did mask the appropriate *prima materia*, she could not be transformed from corrupt base metal to pure gold because she lacks the "médiateur plastique," the shaping link between body and soul that suits the one to the other.[69] There is a short circuit in her system that prevents influences from flowing in either direction. It is this which leads Ewald to conclude that Alicia's soul, "dans les limbes du Devenir" (*L'Eve*, 62) must have been betrayed into the wrong body.

Alicia does not conform to the image of what Ewald feels she should be, and so he rejects the reality in favour of an illusion he has constructed in his own mind, a transformation of the faulty real woman into a perfected vision of his ideal. Ewald has embarked on the second alchemical operation: putrefaction, "cette destruction de la nature ancienne, cet abandon des manières de voir qu'on avait jusqu'ici."[70]

> Vous l'avez dit, poursuivit Edison, l'être que vous aimez dans la vivante, et qui, pour vous, en est, *seulement*, REEL, n'est point celui qui *apparaît* en cette passante humaine, mais celui de votre Désir.
>
> C'est celui qui n'y existe pas, --bien plus, que *vous savez ne pas y exister*! Car vous n'êtes dupe ni de cette femme, ni de vous-même.
>
> C'est *volontairement* que vous fermez les yeux, ceux de votre esprit, que vous étouffez le démenti de votre conscience, pour ne reconnaître en cette maîtresse que le fantôme désiré. Sa *vraie* personnalité n'est donc autre, pour vous, que l'Illusion, éveillée en tout votre être, par l'éclair de sa beauté. C'est cette Illusion seule que vous vous efforcez, *quand même*, de VITALISER en la présence de votre bien-aimée, malgré l'incessant désenchantement que vous prodigue la mortelle, l'affreuse, la desséchante nullité de la réelle Alicia.
>
> C'est cette *ombre* seule que vous aimez: c'est pour elle que vous voulez mourir. C'est elle *seule* que vous reconnaissez, absolument, comme REELLE! Enfin, c'est

> cette vision objectivée de votre esprit que vous appelez, que vous voyez, que vous CREEZ en votre vivante, *et qui n'est que votre âme dédoublée en elle*. (*L'Eve*, 135-36)[71]

It is when Ewald's self-deception cannot be sustained that he determines to commit suicide. Before he does so, however, he makes what is in essence a plea for alchemical solution, the operation that separates the old body and spirit in preparation for a new union in perfection. Referring to Alicia he cries out in despair, "Ah! qui m'ôtera cette âme de ce corps!" (*L'Eve*, 89). Edison promises to do the next best thing. He tells Ewald, "JE VAIS LUI RAVIR SA PROPRE PRESENCE" (*L'Eve*, 126). The first time Edison sees Alicia it is, significantly, in a mirror. He comments, "Rien d'étonnant, d'ailleurs, à ce que cette belle personne m'apparaisse en son reflet, puisque je vais le lui prendre" (*L'Eve*, 327). In a reversal of the more traditional demonic theft of the soul, Edison will steal Alicia's voice and body, duplicating her "extériorité" (*L'Eve*, 126) without copyright permission, in a pirated second edition (revised) of the original: "*Je tirerai la vivante à un second exemplaire et transfigurée selon vos voeux*!" (*L'Eve*, 127).[72]

What Edison will effect is a "*transsubstantiation*" (*L'Eve*, 104). The choice of term is interesting, since it suggests a sacerdotal function for Edison and his "acolytes" like Annie. The creation of Hadaly thus becomes a holy sacrament. Alicia herself will not appear changed after the "transsubstantiation," but the divine element in her makeup, her goddess-like beauty, will be transferred to Hadaly. In this fashion, the android will be metamorphosed from formlessness into form: "Tout vague disparaît, alors" (*L'Eve*, 295). She will become the new Alicia. Animated by the spiritual beauty of Sowana and programmed with the artistic beauty of poet and musician, this Alicia Clary will seem

> non seulement transfigurée, non seulement de la "compagnie" la plus enchanteresse, non seulement d'une élévation d'esprit des plus augustes, mais revêtue d'une sorte d'immortalité. --Enfin, cette sotte éblouissante sera non plus une femme, mais un ange; non plus une maîtresse, mais une amante; non plus la Réalité, mais l'IDEAL. (*L'Eve*, 105)[73]

All this will happen, Edison says, because

> Je vais, d'abord, réincarner toute cette extériorité, qui vous est si délicieusement mortelle, en une Apparition dont la ressemblance et le charme HUMAINS dépasseront votre espoir et tous vos rêves! Ensuite, *à la place de cette âme, qui vous rebute dans la vivante, j'insufflerai une autre sorte d'âme*, moins consciente d'elle-même, peut-être, (--et encore, qu'en savons-nous? et qu'importe!--) mais suggestive d'impressions mille fois plus belles, plus nobles, plus élevées, c'est-à-dire revêtues de ce caractère d'éternité sans lequel tout n'est que comédie chez les vivants. Je reproduirai strictement, je dédoublerai cette femme, à l'aide sublime de la Lumière! Et, la projetant sur sa MATIERE RADIANTE, j'illuminerai de votre mélancolie l'âme imaginaire de cette créature nouvelle, capable d'étonner des anges. (*L'Ève*, 126-27)

Edison needs Ewald's cooperation with his project, however, for as we have seen, two elements are essential to the completion of the alchemical process and to the production of every unified work of art: "la Science ET la Foi."[74] Edison alludes to these prerequisites of the Great Work when he tells Ewald, "Tenez, mon cher lord, à nous deux, nous formons un éternel symbole: moi, je représente la Science avec la toute-puissance de ses mirages: vous, l'Humanité et son ciel perdu" (*L'Ève*, 141). Since Hadaly is to be the alchemical homunculus, a living work of art, Ewald's faith, his creative imagination, must be united with Edison's science and Annie's craftsmanship in order to complete the Great Work of animating Hadaly.

Edison reminds Ewald that he has already created an illusory image of the real Alicia to satisfy his idealism. The inventor insists that his friend can, therefore, repeat his act of creative faith with the more worthy subject of transformation, Hadaly:

> --Eh bien, conclut Edison, puisqu'il est avéré que d'ores et déjà vous ne vivez qu'avec une Ombre, à laquelle vous prêtez si chaleureusement et si fictivement l'être, je vous offre, moi, de tenter la même expérience sur cette ombre de votre esprit extérieurement réalisée, voilà tout. Illusion pour illusion, l'Etre de cette présence mixte que l'on appelle Hadaly dépend de la volonté libre de celui qui OSERA la concevoir. SUGGEREZ-LUI DE VOTRE ETRE! Affirmez-le, d'un peu de votre foi vive, comme vous affirmez l'être, après tout si relatif, de toutes les illusions qui vous entourent. Soufflez sur ce front idéal! Et vous verrez jusqu'où l'Alicia de votre volonté se réalisera, s'unifiera, s'animera dans cette Ombre. (L'Eve, 136)

Hadaly herself later appeals to Ewald to believe in her and thus ensure her continued existence:

> Mon être, ici-bas, pour toi du moins, ne dépend que de ta libre volonté. Attribue-moi l'être, affirme-toi que je suis! renforce-moi de toi-même. Et soudain, je serai tout animée, à tes yeux, du degré de réalité dont m'aura pénétrée ton Bon-Vouloir créateur. Comme une femme, je ne serai pour toi que ce que tu me croiras. (L'Eve, 384; final emphasis mine)

Edison proposes that together he and Ewald assume the role of Pygmalion for, as he himself points out, as android, Hadaly "c'est la statue attendant le Pygmalion créateur" (L'Eve, 293). To demonstrate his almost magical powers and convince Ewald to cooperate, Edison first effects a reversal of the usual metamorphosis associated with Ovid's sculptor. With a magic wave of his hand, he transforms

Alicia by means of hypnosis into a duplicate of the statue she images:

> Les paupières de celle-ci se refermèrent doucement, graduellement, sur ses yeux d'aurore; ses bras, pétris en pierre de Paros, demeurèrent immobiles, --l'un appuyé à la table, l'autre main, tenant le bouquet de roses pâles, pendante sur un coussin.
>
> Statue de l'olympienne Vénus, attifée au goût moderne, elle semblait figée en cette attitude et la beauté de son visage était revêtue, en cet instant, d'un reflet surhumain. (L'Eve, 344)

This glimmer, a reflection of the beyond, is a suggestion of what Ewald may achieve with Hadaly if only he will use his creative faith to assist Edison in bringing the android to life.

If Ewald's act of faith is sincere, two transformations will be effected in turn: Hadaly's, and then his own. The diamond in the rough will become the actualized lapis, Hadaly will take on life, and the transformed will then serve as transformer in both senses of the word: converting the electrical impulses of the au-delà, the light and creative energy of the divine Word, to a current and voltage that the circuitry of Ewald's humanity can tolerate and then utilize for his personal transformation. Hadaly will serve as mid-wife at Ewald's spiritual rebirth because, unlike Evelyn and Alicia, who are forces of death and corruption, the android (as alchemical homunculus, herself a product of "la Palingénésie" or reincarnation)[75] is a life-giving force. Edison tells Ewald,

> vous pèserez ensuite, au profond de votre conscience, si l'auxiliatrice Créature-fantôme [Hadaly] qui vous ramènera vers le désir de la Vie n'est pas plus vraiment digne de porter le nom d'HUMAINE que le Vivant-spectre [Alicia] dont la soi-disant et chétive "réalité" ne sut jamais vous inspirer que la soif de la Mort. (L'Eve, 136)

Later, Hadaly informs Ewald that he is a man in whom the au-delà takes special interest, a man "qui sent bien, déjà, ses actes et ses arrière-pensées tramer la chair et la forme futures de sa renaissance, ou . . . de sa continuité" (L'Eve, 377).[76] In granting permission to use Alicia as model for Hadaly, Ewald accepts the role he himself must play in the transformation of the android and at the same time recognizes that Hadaly in turn will transform his own life. He tells Edison,

> Puisque le pouvoir de votre prodigieuse intelligence vous le permet peut-être, je vous confie, pour le transfigurer en un mirage capable de me donner un change sublime, ce pâle fantôme humain. Et si, dans cette oeuvre, vous délivrez, pour moi, la forme sacrée de ce corps de la maladie de cette âme, je jure, à mon tour, d'essayer, --au souffle d'une espérance qui m'est encore inconnue, --de compléter cette ombre rédemptrice. (L'Eve, 348)

As the "créature idéale," the irrational projection of Ewald's "âme dédoublée,"[77] Hadaly is the incarnation of the feminine aspect of Ewald, "la femme en lui," that alchemical sacred sister Jung terms the anima (L'Eve, 384, 136, 393).[78] If Ewald listens to his "Raison traître" (L'Eve, 383) and rejects Hadaly, he will be renouncing an important part of himself[79] and losing his opportunity to transform his life from the plane of apparent reality but actual illusion represented by Alicia, to that of transcendent reality represented by Hadaly. His life will henceforth be marked by regrets: Hadaly warns him that in rejecting her, in denying her life,

> Tu perds tout ce que je perds. Essaie de m'oublier, va! c'est impossible. Celui qui a regardé une Andréide comme tu me regardes a tué la femme en lui, car l'Idéal violé ne pardonne pas et nul ne joue impunément à la divinité! (L'Eve, 393)[80]

Because he has been exposed to the ideal, it is as though Ewald has been rebaptized. Since this sacrament leaves an indelible mark on the soul, should he now turn away from the ideal, he will be condemning himself to a punishment worse than any he might have been subjected to prior to his initiation.

On the other hand, should Ewald choose to believe in her, the choice, Hadaly tells him, "te rend un dieu" (*L'Ève*, 384). He will no longer be involved, as he was with Alicia, in "un perpétuel et toujours stérile essai de rédemption" (*L'Eve*, 136), since acceptance of Hadaly will lead to completion of the alchemical Oeuvre for Ewald by effecting philosophical coagulation, that unity of being that, we have seen, brings transcendence to eternity through "la pleine possession de soi-même en un seul et même instant" (*Axël*, 36).[81]

At the conclusion of the epiphanic garden scene in which Ewald finally accepts Hadaly, the couple join in an embrace representing alchemical conjunction, the preliminary union of opposites which must precede the final philosophical coagulation. The scene closely resembles those in *Axël* which signify the mystic marriage of the male and female principles: the death scene and the somewhat earlier embrace in which Sara's hair "se dénouent, roulent et l'enveloppent":[82]

> Hadaly. . . . sembla tressaillir: puis, avec un mouvement d'infini abandon, elle noua ses bras à l'entour du cou de lord Ewald. De son sein haletant, qu'elle pressait contre lui, sortait *une senteur d'asphodèles*: ses cheveux, se dénouant éperdument, roulèrent au long de son dos sur sa robe.
>
> Une grâce lente, et languide, et pénétrante, adoucissait sa rayonnante et sévère beauté; elle semblait ne pouvoir parler! La tête appuyée sur l'épaule du jeune homme, elle le regardait entre ses cils, en souriant d'un radieux sourire. Déesse-féminéisée, illusion charnelle, elle

> épouvantait la nuit. *Elle semblait aspirer l'âme de son amant* comme pour s'en douer elle-même: ses lèvres entr'ouvertes, à demi pâmées, bougeaient et frémissaient, effleurant celles de son créateur en un baiser virginal.
>
> --Enfin!... dit-elle sourdement: --ô bien-aimé, *c'est donc toi!* (*L'Eve*, 394-95; emphasis mine)[83]

Conyngham points out that "c'est donc toi!" is more than a simple lover's sigh; it is the ultimate answer to the question with which Ewald precipitated Hadaly's revelations: "qui est-tu?" (*L'Eve*, 374).[84]

Until just a short time before asking this question, Ewald had believed that the woman he was speaking with in the garden of Menlo Park was a miraculously transformed but nonetheless mortal Alicia. He discovers to his surprise and horror, however, that it is Hadaly, acting in her new role as Alicia, with whom he has been talking. The setting of the garden scene is important. Conyngham draws attention to the theatrical appearance of the natural setting: "L'horizon donnait la sensation d'un décor" and "Les cieux paraissaient artificiels" (*L'Eve*, 361).[85] It is appropriate that Hadaly should make her début as Alicia in a stage-like setting, for she has assumed the role of an actress portraying an actress.

Hadaly is "une merveilleuse comédienne, douée . . . d'un talent plus homogène, plus sûr, et bien autrement *sérieux* que miss Alicia Clary" (*L'Eve*, 168), because behind her exterior beauty there is neither the sordid corruption of women like Evelyn Habal, nor the dull mediocrity of an Alicia: there is only an impersonal "zéro" (*L'Eve*, 261)[86] which has the potential to be whatever Ewald fancies. Hadaly "est multiple . . . comme le monde des rêves" (*L'Eve*, 168). The archetypical female, like every woman she contains several types--

"tant de femmes . . . qu'aucun harem ne pourrait les contenir" (L'Eve, 385). Among these women is the ideal, "le type suprême qui domine ces visions, HADALY . . . [la] parfaite" (L'Eve, 168). If Ewald desires a particular sort of woman, perhaps "une femme joyeuse, et dont les paroles ressemblent à des oiseaux," he has only to press the appropriate jewel on Hadaly's hand and she will be "transfigurée en une femme de cette nature" (L'Eve, 385). But to assign to Hadaly a specific personality, to choose one of the harem women over another, would be to limit her role in the drama, and thus to destroy the ideal within her, for the ideal, the absolute, is by definition impersonal and "sans bornes" (L'Eve, 383).[87]

The more restrictions Ewald, as director of the drama, imposes on Hadaly, the less freedom she has as actress to interpret her role and, consequently, the less success she will have in her mission as envoy, as "auxiliatrice" (L'Eve, 382) of the occult dramatists who have selected her to communicate with Ewald. This is, after all, her real role, and from it will follow Ewald's spiritual transformation, hinted at by Hadaly when she tells Ewald "Je surviens, de la part des tiens futurs" (L'Eve, 383).[88]

If Evelyn Habal incorporates the negative features of the Leanhuan Shee, Hadaly embodies the positive. She is the new Eve destined to tempt Ewald to the divine through a scientific "équation de l'Amour" which will be purified of all "maléfices démontrés inévitables" in ordinary human love,

> puisque le propre de l'Andréide est d'annuler, en quelques heures, dans le plus passionné des coeurs, ce qu'il peut contenir, pour le modèle, de désirs bas et dégradants,

> ceci par le seul fait de les saturer d'une solennité inconnue et dont nul, je crois, ne peut imaginer l'irrésistible effet avant de l'avoir éprouvé. (L'Eve, 243)

As we might expect, the transformed love Ewald will feel for Hadaly will not include sexual passion. He has already renounced this in his relationship with Alicia because, although he is obsessed by her "charme EXTERIEUR," he is revolted by her moral being and is, therefore, attached to her "par une sorte d'admiration douloureuse" (L'Eve, 93). His "passion . . . d'un platonisme absolu" (L'Eve, 93) will be transferred from Alicia to Hadaly, who alone is worthy of it.[89]

Hadaly merits Ewald's love, elevated by alchemical sublimation, because, unlike "la mensongère, médiocre et toujours changeante Réalité," she is perfect and changeless: the embodiment of the Ideal in "une positive, prestigieuse et toujours fidèle Illusion" (L'Eve, 322). Hadaly is "inaltérable" (L'Eve, 318). Time will not transform her "Into a withered crone" (Poems, 516) in need of Evelyn's "Art de la toilette" (L'Eve, 232), nor must she await "Bodily decrepitude" (Poems, 523) to attain wisdom because she is, in Fernand Clerget's words, "la fée électrique"[90] and, as we have seen, supernatural wisdom is among the attributes of the faery. Edison says that Hadaly's underground domain, in the American equivalent of the Celtic síd-mound, is "un peu le royaume de la féerie" (L'Eve, 176). He describes Hadaly in terms that bring to mind the inhabitants of Tír-na-n-Og:

> La nature change, mais non l'Andréide. Nous autres, nous vivons, nous mourrons, --que sais-je! L'Andréide ne connaît ni la vie, ni la maladie, ni la mort. Elle est au-dessus de toutes les imperfections et de toutes les servitudes! Elle garde la beauté du rêve. C'est une inspiratrice. Elle parle et chante comme un génie,

> --mieux même, car elle résume, en sa magnifique parole, les pensées de plusieurs génies. --Jamais son coeur ne change: elle n'en a pas. (L'Eve, 301)[91]

Although Raitt states that Hadaly, as "un message de l'au-delà . . . ne relève d'aucune théorie occultiste bien définie, malgré de très fortes teintures d'occultisme,"[92] she bears a striking resemblance to the "creatures of whim" that Yeats associates with the faeries. I have already quoted from the passage in Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry in which Yeats discusses these beings, but it is important enough in the present context to repeat sections from it and from Yeats's explanatory note on the "Gods of the Earth":

> Are they [the faeries] "the gods of the earth"? Perhaps! Many poets, and all mystic and occult writers, in all ages and countries, have declared that behind the visible are chains and chains of conscious beings, who are not of heaven but of the earth, who have no inherent form but change according to their whim, or the mind that sees them. You cannot lift your hand without influencing and being influenced by hoards. The visible world is merely their skin. In dreams we go amongst them, and play with them, and combat with them. They are, perhaps, human souls in the crucible--these creatures of whim.
>
> * * * * *
>
> Occultists from Paracelsus to Elephas Levi [sic] divide the nature spirits into gnomes, sylphs, salamanders, undines; or earth, air, fire, and water spirits. . . . It has been held by many that somewhere out of the void there is a perpetual dribble of souls; that these souls pass through many shapes before they incarnate as men--hence the nature spirits. They are invisible--except at rare moments and times; they inhabit the interior elements, while we live upon the outer and the gross. Some float perpetually through space, and the motion of the planets drives them hither and thither in currents. Hence some Rosicrucians have thought astrology may foretell many things; for a tide of them flowing around the earth arouses there, emotions and changes, according to its nature.[93]

In Comment on devient alchimiste, Jollivet-Castelot includes a section in which he treats the "Opération Palingénésique," the creation of the alchemical homunculus. A footnote to this section, probably influenced by Lévi, provides a variation on these passages from Yeats. Jollivet-Castelot writes,

> nous pouvons toujours affirmer que les homunculi étaient des élémentaux ondins, gnômes, sylphes, etc., etc. (les indigènes de l'Astral forment légion), que l'on attirait par évocation de l'Astral et qu'on revêtait d'une sorte de corps matériel, au moyen d'opérations alchimiques et hermétiques. On sait que les élémentaux, avides d'existence physique, guettent une incarnation quelconque; dès que les éléments leur sont offerts, ils se précipitent sur le Plan matériel.[94]

We have seen that behind Sowana is a separate occult being in control of ~~the~~ android. This secret Hadaly and the beings who have sent her as envoy are "les indigènes de l'Astral," spirits in the crucible, in that world of inverse correspondence that Yeats frequently images as Tír-na-n-Og and that Hadaly herself describes as "la réalité d'un autre espace inexprimable et dont l'espace apparent, où nous sommes enfermés, n'est que la figure" (L'Eve, 377). Because, like Hanrahan and Yeats's other characters who dream of faeryland, Ewald has an overriding love of beauty and contains within himself "le germe d'une ultérieure élection" (L'Eve, 376-77),[95] he is privileged to catch glimpses of this other world

> en ces instants où, voilé par une demi-veille et sur le point d'être ressaisi par les pesanteurs de la Raison et des Sens, l'esprit est encore tout imbu du fluide mixte de ces rares et visionnaires sommeils. (L'Eve, 376)

Hadaly reminds him, "c'étaient comme des ombres ou des formes qui t'apparaissaient; tu distinguais, parfois, une figure; elle te regardait avec une solennelle fixité" (*L'Eve*, 375). She then describes the world of the crucible, of Yeats's Great Memory or Anima Mundi, and its relationship with those who "in dream . . . go amongst" its invisible inhabitants:

> Ce vivant éther est une illimitée et libre région où, pour peu qu'il s'attarde, le voyageur privilégié sent comme se projeter, sur l'intime de son être temporel, l'ombre anticipée et avant-courrière de l'être qu'il devient. Une affinité s'établit donc, alors, entre son âme et les êtres, encore *futurs* pour lui, de ces occultes univers contigus à celui des sens; et le chemin de relation où le courant se réalise entre ce double monde n'est autre que ce domaine de l'Esprit, que la Raison, --exultant et riant de ses lourdes chaînes pour une heure triomphale, --appelle, avec un dédain vide, L'IMAGINAIRE. (*L'Eve*, 377)[96]

The spirits in Anima Mundi seek to communicate with man in order to draw him to the infinite, to "la plus certaine de toutes les réalités." Because "Nous en avons une lueur si faible" (*L'Eve*, 376), however, they must express themselves indirectly. By day "ces précurseurs, si inquiétants, . . . n'apparaissent . . . que dans l'éclair d'un pressentiment, d'une coïncidence ou d'un symbole" (*L'Eve*, 377). At night, in dreams, they can be somewhat more direct, but they are still forced to take from the world of the material a form comprehensible to man who, although he has the divine gift of imagination, is, nonetheless, limited by his physical senses. As in Yeats's "Rosa Alchemica," so in Villiers's *L'Eve future*, the beings in the crucible seek expressive masks to aid them in their approaches to the human world. Hadaly describes the process:

> lorsqu'à la faveur de cette substance infinie, l'Imaginaire (au dégagement de laquelle, en nous et autour de nous, les ténèbres et leur silence sont si favorables), lorsqu'ils [les êtres du creuset] s'aventurent jusqu'en

> nos limbes et que, par une action réciproque et médiatrice, ils réfléchissent leur présence, non pas *en* une âme, --cela ne se peut pas encore, --mais *sur* une âme disposée à leur visitation, --devenue, pendant l'assoupissement de sa Raison, à proximité de leur monde, --d'une âme presque échappée et confondue avec leur essence, déjà, --oh! si tu savais... comme ils s'efforcent de transparaître, autant que possible, pour avertir et augmenter sa foi, fût-ce au moyen des Terreurs de la Nuit! --comme ils se vêtent, au hasard, de toutes les opacités illusoires qui peuvent renforcer demain le souvenir de leur passage! --Ils n'ont pas d'yeux pour regarder?... N'importe; --ils te regardent par le chaton d'une bague, par le bouton de métal de la lampe, par une lueur d'étoile dans la glace. --Ils n'ont pas de poumons pour parler?... Mais ils s'incarnent dans *la voix du vent plaintif*; dans le craquement du bois mort d'un meuble ancien, dans le bruit d'une arme qui tombe, soudainement, alors, faute d'équilibre... (car il est une Prescience qui permet éternellement!) Ils n'ont pas de formes ni de visages visibles? ils s'en figurent un avec les plis d'une étoffe, ils s'accusent dans la tige feuillue d'un arbuste, dans les lignes d'un objet, et se servent ainsi des ombres pour s'incarner, te dis-je, en tout ce qui vous entoure, au mieux de la plus intense sensation qu'ils doivent laisser de leur visite.
>
> Et le premier *mouvement-naturel* de l'Ame est de les *reconnaître*, en et par cette même terreur sainte qui les atteste. (*L'Ève*, 377-78; emphasis on "la voix du vent plaintif" mine)

Communication between the crucible and this world does not flow just one way, however. The same imaginative power that allows the spirits to contact man may be used by him to accomplish the alchemical operation of distillation and to call them down from the Great Memory, as Hanrahan does with Cleena, and as Michael Robartes and his group do in evoking the divinities in "Rosa Alchemica." Hadaly is called down from the crucible by the imaginative powers of Edison, although Edison is only partly aware of just what he will accomplish when he tells Ewald

> Je terrasserai l'Illusion! Je l'emprisonnerai. Je forcerai, dans cette vision [l'Andréide], l'Idéal lui-même à se manifester, pour la première fois, à *vos sens*, PALPABLE, AUDIBLE ET MATERIALISE. (*L'Eve*, 127)

What Edison succeeds in constructing is the electrical mousetrap for the gods that, in Strindberg's play *To Damascus*, the Stranger attempts to construct.[97]

Edison may not realize the full significance of what he is saying when he terms his android "un Etre de limbes, une possibilité" and later when he explains to Ewald that "elle a pris l'attitude de l'enfant qui va naître; elle se cache le front devant la vie" (*L'Eve*, 118, 245); nevertheless, his descriptions are startlingly accurate. Although she is not exactly betrayed into a cradle like Yeats's Edain (*Poems*, 276 ff), Hadaly *is* seduced out of "l'*intelligible, informe et inévitable* INFINI" (*L'Eve*, 381), out of the Great Memory, into the beautiful form of Alicia transferred to the android. When Edison shows Hadaly a slide projection of "l'image radieuse" of Alicia, she acknowledges her seduction: "Oh!... si belle!... Et me forcer de vivre!" (*L'Eve*, 116).

Hadaly's materialization, like that of Hanrahan's Cleena or Dhoya's faery woman, is gradual and takes place over some time. The process closely resembles that of photography, in which Edison has a strong interest. In Book I, Chapter X he fantasizes about photography in the same manner as he does about phonograph recordings of all the great moments in history and pre-history; if only photography had been discovered sooner, because "c'est la réalité positive qu'elle nous eût transmise," and

> Il nous eût été si agréable de posséder quelques bonnes épreuves photographiques (prises au moment même du phénomène), de Josué arrêtant le soleil, par exemple? --de quelques Vues du Paradis terrestre prises de l'Entrée aux épées flamboyantes; de l'Arbre de la Science; du Serpent, etc; --de quelques vues du Déluge, prises du sommet de l'Ararat (l'industrieux Japhet aurait, je le parierais, emporté un objectif dans l'arche s'il eût connu ce merveilleux instrument). (L'Eve, 43, 44)

Hadaly's materialization begins in those twilight moments between waking and sleeping when "d'inquiétantes visions" would trouble Ewald while his spirit was "errant encore sur la frontière de ce sommeil étrange et de la vie" (L'Eve, 375, 377).[98] The shutter of Ewald's spirit, opening briefly on eternity, captures a picture on the film of his imagination, but it is still fleeting and invisible to his waking mind, his consciousness.[99] He dismisses it as simply

> le résultat d'un jeu des ombres nocturnes, d'un reflet des nuages lointains sur le rideau, de l'aspect, étrangement animé par la vertu des silencieux mirages de la nuit, de [ses] vêtements jetés sur un meuble, à la hâte, au hasard du sommeil. (L'Eve, 376)

The materialization takes a step forward, development of the negative begins, when Hadaly takes up tentative residence in the still indefinite and veiled form of Edison's android, with its "visage de ténèbres" concealed by "un tissu de deuil dont l'obscurité lui cachait toute la tête" (L'Eve, 113, 114). With the making of the print, the transferral by photosculpture of Alicia's beautiful shape to the android, the materialization of Hadaly, the "atterrassement" of the Ideal, is all but complete. The only thing needed is a means of anchoring Hadaly to this world. As in the development of the photographic print, a "fixer" is necessary to stabilize the image of the ideal in a permanent "cliché galvanoplastique" (L'Ève, 16)[100] that will not fade and disappear. Ewald's faith, his belief in Hadaly, provides the fixer when, fully aware of what he is doing, he deliberately chooses Hadaly over Alicia and effects the alchemical operation of conjunction:

> --Fantôme! Fantôme! Hadaly, dit-il, --c'en est fait! Certes, je n'ai pas grand mérite à préférer ta redoutable merveille à la banale, décevante et fastidieuse amie que le sort m'octroya! Mais, que les cieux et la terre le prennent comme bon pourra leur sembler! je résous de m'enfermer avec toi, ténébreuse idole! Je donne ma démission de vivant--et que le siècle passe!... car je viens de m'apercevoir que, placées l'une auprès de l'autre, c'est positivement, la vivante qui est le fantôme. (L'Eve, 394)

The "fixing" of the ideal and the beautiful is an important concept in L'Eve future. It underlies the interest in phonograph recordings and photography in the early chapters of the novel, as well as the construction of the android. What Edison laments, in regretting that photography and the phonograph were not invented earlier, is the loss of a fixed image not only of the "passing parade" of history, but of the divine as it once manifested itself to humanity. Since modern man in general has, like Alicia, become a mediocre proponent of common sense and bourgeois attitudes, the divine has withdrawn and reveals itself now only indirectly and on rare occasions to very special people, and so the lack of fixed images of the ideal is unfortunate.[101]

Nothing in man's earthly life is fixed and unchanging, not even his own body and identity:

> pas un jour ne s'envole sans modifier quelques lignes du corps humain et . . . la science physiologique nous démontre qu'il renouvelle entièrement ses atomes tous

> les sept ans environ. Est-ce que le corps existe à ce point? Est-ce qu'on se ressemble jamais à soi-même? Alors que cette femme, vous et moi-même, nous avions d'âge une heure vingt, étions-nous ce que nous sommes ce soir? Se ressembler! Quel est ce préjugé des temps lacustres ou troglodytes? (L'Eve, 129)[102]

Edison concludes, "Nous ne sommes qu'un 'n'étant plus' perpétuel" (L'Eve, 149). Stability belongs to the domain of the ideal, paradoxically, to the realm of those indefinite vague shadowy forms, those fleeting "figures dans la nuit" that regarded Ewald "avec une solennelle fixité" (L'Eve, 375).

Since man's nature, like that of the entire universe, is founded on the principle of the attraction of opposites, man perpetually desires the fixity lacking in his own life but found in the ideal. This is true even in his love relationships; when Ewald objects that Hadaly, with her pre-programmed poetic responses, will become monotonous, Edison replies, "ce n'est que la nouveauté qui nous désenchante" (L'Eve, 261). Ewald agrees. Edison points out that Hadaly represents for Ewald

> les premières heures de l'Amour immobilisées, --l'heure de l'Idéal à jamais faite prisonnière: et vous vous plaignez déjà de ce qu'elle ne pourra plus rouvrir ses inconstantes ailes pour vous quitter encore! O nature humaine! (L'Eve, 261)

Edison criticises Ewald for foolishly desiring "que l'Ombre soit aussi changeante que la Réalité" when

> --Eterniser une seule heure de l'amour, --la plus belle, --celle, par exemple, où le mutuel aveu se perdit sous l'éclair du premier baiser, oh! l'arrêter au passage, la fixer et s'y définir! y incarner son esprit et son dernier voeu! ne serait-ce donc pas le rêve de tous les êtres humains? Ce n'est que pour essayer de ressaisir cette heure idéale que l'on continue d'aimer encore, malgré les différences et les amoindrissements apportés

> par les heures suivantes. --Oh! ravoir celle-là, toute seule! --Mais les autres ne sont douces qu'autant qu'elles l'augmentent et la rappellent! Comment se lasser jamais de rééprouver cette unique joie: la grande heure monotone! L'être aimé ne représente plus que cette oeuvre perpétuellement à reconquérir et que l'on s'acharne en vain à vouloir ressusciter. Les autres heures ne font que monnayer cette heure d'or! Si l'on pouvait la renforcer des meilleurs instants, parmi ceux des nuits ultérieures, elle apparaîtrait comme l'idéal de toute félicité réalisé. (L'Eve, 262-63; emphasis mine)

As in Yeats's work, in L'Eve future, the question of the immutability of the ideal and the mutability of the mortal is a complex one. In the case of Villiers's novel, however, the difficulty is posed more by the changeability of this world, than it is by the metamorphic powers of the unchangeable ideal--although, as we have seen, Villiers's ideal is, at times, like Yeats's, both unformed and therefore changeable, and an agent of transformation.

Before he discovers that the android has an independent life, a truly animating spirit, Ewald asks Edison how he can expect him to love an impersonal "zéro" that is limited in its response by its programming. Ewald complains, "c'est . . . une comédie que vous me proposez de jouer perpétuellement" (L'Eve, 257). Edison replies that, appearances to the contrary, this is the way life is. Man thinks that he is free and that conversations, like his existence, are new and fresh, full of innovation and variety. In reality, however, "Tout le monde . . . joue [la comédie]! forcément! Et chacun avec soi-même" (L'Eve, 258). Speech and conversation, be they ever so intelligent, are repetitive echoes, based on linguistic paradigms and literary or historical models. They are filled with formulas, jargon, cliché:

> --Improvisé!... s'écria Edison: vous croyez donc que l'on improvise quoi que ce soit? qu'on ne *récite* pas toujours? --Mais, enfin, lorsque vous priez Dieu, est-ce que tout cela n'est pas réglé, jour par jour, dans ces livres d'oraisons qu'enfant vous avez appris par coeur? En un mot ne lisez-vous pas ou ne récitez-vous pas, toujours, les *mêmes* prières du matin et du soir, lesquelles ont été composées, *une fois pour toutes et pour le mieux*, par ceux qui ont eu qualité pour cela? et qui s'y entendaient? --Est-ce que notre Dieu, lui-même, enfin, ne vous en a pas donné la formule en vous disant: "Quand vous prierez, vous prierez COMME CECI, etc." --Est-ce que, depuis bientôt deux mille années, toutes les autres prières sont autre chose que de pâles dilutions de celle qu'il nous a léguée?
>
> Même dans la vie, est-ce que toutes les conversations mondaines n'ont pas l'air de fins de lettres?
>
> En vérité, toute parole n'est et ne peut être qu'une redite--et il n'est pas besoin de Hadaly pour se trouver, toujours, en tête-à-tête avec un fantôme.
>
> Chaque métier humain a son ensemble de phrases, --où chaque homme tourne et se vire jusqu'à la mort: et son vocabulaire, qui lui semble si étendu, se réduit à une centaine, au plus, de phrases types, constamment récitées. (*L'Eve*, 264-65)

Since, in effect, "there is no new thing under the sun,"[103] how, Edison asks, can Ewald object to conversing with the android who has "only" the great words of the poets as beautiful short cuts through the boredom of man's trite reality in its illusory Protean variety:

> Et comment hésiteriez-vous à préférer, comme économie de temps, les admirables condensations verbales, composées par ceux-là qui ont le métier de la parole, l'habitude de la pensée, et qui peuvent exprimer, à eux seuls, les sensations de toute l'Humanité! Ces hommes-mondes ont analysé les plus subtiles nuances des passions. C'est l'essence, que, seule, ils ont gardée, qu'ils expriment en condensant des milliers de volumes au profond d'une seule page. C'est nous-mêmes qu'ils sont, quels que nous soyons. Ils sont les incarnations du dieu Protée qui veille en nos coeurs. Toutes nos idées, nos paroles, nos sentiments, pesés au carat, sont étiquetés, en leurs esprits avec leurs plus lointaines ramifications, celles où nous n'osons descendre, nous aventurer! Ils savent, d'avance et pour le mieux, tout ce que nos passions peuvent nous suggérer d'intense, de magique et d'idéal. Nous ne ferons pas mieux, je vous assure: --et je ne vois pas pourquoi nous

> nous donnerions la peine de parler plus mal, en voulant nous en rapporter à notre inhabileté, sous prétexte qu'elle est, du moins, personnelle, —alors que ceci, vous le voyez, n'est encore qu'une illusion. (L'Eve, 266)

Art is not limited, however, to condensing and labelling man's thoughts and actions. It is also the role of art to capture the divine, and to fix its image, for without this fixing, the divine will, in Yeats's words, wander on its way.[104] Hadaly explains to Ewald:

> Mon être, ici-bas, pour toi du moins, ne dépend que de ta libre volonté. . . . Si tu doutes de mon être, je suis perdue, --ce qui signifie également que tu perds en moi la créature idéale qu'il t'eût suffi d'y appeler. (L'Eve, 384)

If Ewald does not recognize and accept the ideal in Hadaly, it will disappear for him, but not necessarily for everyone, for the ideal, of course, is eternal and will simply go in search of a more deserving--because more receptive--person to reveal itself to, someone who has "la simplicité de [le] croire!" (L'Eve, 384).[105]

In capturing and fixing the ideal, art is assisted by technology, which plays a dual role. In the first place, technological extensions of man's senses allow him to penetrate the veil of matter which masks the hidden world of mystery and wonder beyond. Ross Chambers points to the parallel between the special vision of the occult medium and that of the scientist whose sharply honed powers of observation are extended by the use of scientific instruments:

> Les instruments d'optique dont se munit le chercheur scientifique--microscopes, téléscopes, ophthalmoscopes... --le dotent d'un regard artificiel, comparable à ce sixième sens ou à cet oeil intérieur dont usent tous ceux qui savent percer le voile des apparences. . . . En effet, celui qui, grâce à un assemblage de verres et de miroirs, a soudain la révélation d'un "monde"

> jusqu'alors ignoré--monde de l'infiniment petit ou de l'infiniment grand--non seulement sera davantage porté à croire en l'existence d'autres mondes "invisibles," mais aussi sera tenté de concevoir ses instruments de recherche comme des correcteurs d'une vision affaiblie ou voilée, d'un regard qui, ne voyant plus que la matière apparente, ne voit pas clair.[106]

Chambers also notes that technology provides the means of communicating over great distances, often in a seemingly disembodied fashion. The instruments, like the telephone and telegraph, that facilitate this communication

> peuvent figurer l'"intersigne," apparaître comme des modèles expérimentaux de ce "sixième sens" qui nous met si mystérieusement en communication avec les absents, et surtout avec ces grands Absents de l'extramonde que sont les morts.[107]

Villiers treats these aspects of technology most directly in the Claire Lenoir section of Tribulat Bonhomet. Tribulat utilizes his ophthalmoscope to examine the eyes of the dead Claire. In this way, he hopes, "seul entre les vivants, j'allais, le premier, regarder dans l'Infini par le trou de la serrure."[108] To his horror, he discovers imprinted on Claire's retina the image of the last thing she saw while alive: an occult vision of her dead husband reincarnated as a savage "Ottysor-vampire" holding aloft the bloody head of her former lover.[109] The vision serves as verification that Tribulat Bonhomet, with his positivist common sense denial of the mysterious beyond, had been mistaken, and that Claire and her husband, each in their different ways, had been right in insisting that there is more to life than meets the physical eye.[110] Tribulat himself concludes that

> la Science, la souriante vieille aux yeux clairs, à la logique un peu trop désintéressée, à la fraternelle embrassade, me ricanait à l'oreille qu'elle n'était, elle aussi, qu'un leurre de l'Inconnu qui nous guette et nous attend.[111]

In L'Eve future there are many instances of technological extensions of the senses, including the telephone that links Edison with the mysterious Sowana in her underground habitat. The most notable technological "leurre de l'Inconnu," however, is Hadaly herself. Chambers writes,

> Construire un automate, c'est donc bien construire une sorte d'instrument d'optique (puisqu'il y a "vision"), mais qui, à la différence des téléscopes et des microscopes, incite le mystère à se manifester dans l'ici-bas au lieu d'amener le regard à transgresser les frontières de l'inconnu.[112]

Hadaly is associated with another piece of scientific equipment of particular interest: Edison's apparatus for measuring the heat of star light. Hadaly tells Ewald that she often enjoys sitting alone in the grounds of the estate late at night and operating the remarkable instrument that is so sensitive it can measure the heat from even the most distant stars, including those that have died long before their light reaches earth. Although the stars that produced the light may have been dead "avant qu'il ait été possible à leurs mortels de distinguer cette terre," nonetheless,

> le rayon sorti de ces astres refroidis devait leur survivre. Il continua sa marche irrévocable dans l'étendue. C'est ainsi qu'aujourd'hui le rayon de quelques-uns de ces foyers en cendres est parvenu jusqu'à nous. De sorte que l'homme qui contemple le Ciel y admire souvent des soleils qui n'existent plus et qu'il y aperçoit quand même, grâce à ce rayon fantôme, dans l'Illusion de l'univers. (L'Eve, 304)

The visible light from the stars represents the invisible astral light, the manifestation of the divine Word in the universe. Although the particular physical source of the light that was the individual star may die, the light itself continues inexorably on its path: the divine energy is not lost.[113] Another star will replace the dead one, for the universe is in a perpetual state of transformation. As technological achievement, Hadaly is the "vase clos" used in distillation and the analogue of Edison's apparatus for measuring the heat of star light. Hadaly, the android, is the instrument for collecting and gauging or interpreting the astral light from which Hadaly, the animating spirit, the occult being, has descended.[114]

After the astral light is captured or collected by distillation, it must be fixed or preserved by conjunction, the embodiment of the ideal. Technology assists art with the second task, as it does with the first. The artist, whether photographer, sculptor, musician, poet, weaver uses the technology available to him to embody his vision in a form that will, for a time at least, hold Eternal Beauty captive.[115] Thus Hadaly, the automaton, collects and fixes the ideal, as Edison's phonograph recording does the nightingale's song,[116] the printer's page does the poet's lyrics, the founder's casting does the sculptor's statue. As a result, even when the original source of the art work is lost, when the artist, like those long dead stars, is no longer there, his creative light, which continues to shine through time and space, is collected and fixed in a form that makes it available to later generations on earth. Technology preserves a lasting testimony to genius and bears witness to the divine Word of which the artist and his work are special manifestations.[117]

Of course, with time and accidents, even technology may fail and a work of art be lost to humanity: Edison recognizes this in his lament:

> Oui, oui, tout s'efface, en effet! . . . --même les reflets sur le collodion, même les pointillés sur les feuilles d'étain. Vanité des vanités! tout est, bien décidément, vanité. (L'Eve, 46-47)

Man's artistic achievements, like all his accomplishments on this earth, are eventually dispersed, for the ideal cannot be held captive forever in this mortal and changeable world. The gates to eternity open only briefly before they shut again, as Hanrahan discovered. And thus at the conclusion of L'Eve future, Hadaly is lost at sea. When the steamship The Wonderful is destroyed by fire,[118] Hadaly comes to a fitting end for an automaton whose domain is "dans la foudre" (L'Eve, 147), who is animated physically by electricity and spiritually by a being from the astral light: who is, in essence, the divine fire made manifest.

Hadaly's destruction may be seen as a pessimistic conclusion to the work, and perhaps a suggestion that Edison and Ewald, like Faust and Prometheus are damned for having played at being gods.[119] This is the view of A.W. Raitt and Ross Chambers. Raitt writes that Villiers

> veut que nous voyions dans L'Eve future un Faust moderne. Mais du moment où l'on s'aperçoit qu'Ewald et Edison correspondent à Faust et Méphistophélès, tout le sens religieux du roman s'en trouve transformé. Car il devient évident que cette tentative d'animer une Andréïde est une révolte contre l'ordre divin au même titre que l'alliance maudite entre Faust et Méphistophélès. La magie scientifique d'Edison, considérée comme un moyen de s'évader de l'insupportable condition humaine, n'est pas plus légitime que la magie satanique offerte à Faust

> par Méphistophélès. Bien qu'Ewald ne soit pas obligé de vendre son âme comme Faust, et bien qu'Edison n'ait en principe rien de diabolique, ils savent parfaitement tous les deux que, comme Faust, ils sont en train de lancer un défi terrible à Dieu et que c'est le régime de Dieu qu'ils veulent renverser. Ewald le dit: "Mais, entreprendre la création d'un tel être, il me semble que ce serait tenter... Dieu," et Edison répond: "Aussi ne vous ai-je pas dit d'accepter." Ils n'ignorent pas les dangers auxquels ils s'exposent par leur conduite factieuse et blasphématoire, et ils se rendent compte que la fabrication d'une femme artificielle destinée à remplacer celle que Dieu avait créée n'est autre chose qu'une révolte faustienne. . . .
>
> La destruction de l'Andréïde dans le naufrage du Wonderful n'apparaît donc plus comme un simple tour de passe-passe dont le but unique est de terminer le roman tant bien que mal; c'est l'intervention de Dieu qui met fin à un projet qui contrarie l'ordre par Lui établi. Le frisson d'Edison à la dernière page du roman est un frisson de peur et d'horreur en face d'une déité implacable qui ne permet aucun adoucissement des souffrances qu'elle inflige à l'humanité. La révolte échoue et le roman s'achève sur une vision bien plus tragique et bien plus pessimiste que la dernière scène de Faust.[120]

Chambers in essence agrees with Raitt; he describes Hadaly in these terms:

> Créée à l'aide de "la vieille Science défendue"--science noire ou science savante, peu importe--elle n'est qu'un "sombre chef-d'oeuvre," oeuvre satanique conçue "dans un sépulcre" et marquée au sceau de la révolte, de l'orgueil, du prométhéisme humains. Entre cette Eve future et l'Eve perdue, on est déchiré, d'une part, par la hantise d'une absence, et de l'autre, par la tentation d'une présence coupable; et la destruction d'Hadaly au cours de l'incendie du Wonderful a donc, pour lord Ewald et Edison, le caractère d'une punition.[121]

When the ending of L'Eve future is examined in the light of the entire work, however, it is much less bleak than Raitt and Chambers suggest.[122] Hadaly's loss is not a tragic sign of the failure of the Magnum Opus. On the contrary, her disappearance marks another stage in the alchemical process: sublimation, "the mystic detachment from the world"[123] that prepares the way for the final reunion in philosophical coagulation. Ewald and Hadaly cannot remain united in this world because the conjunction they have achieved is but a temporary and imperfect union of opposites that foreshadows the perfection to come.

Ewald and Edison have succeeded in creating the homunculus, who in turn has carried out her role successfully: Hadaly has elevated Ewald's thoughts to the ideal and effectively brought him to the final transmutation.[124] After losing Hadaly, Ewald sends Edison a cryptic telegram that indicates he is no longer obsessed with the false and corrupting beauty of Alicia Clary which masks a "sotte," bourgeois, and worldly reality; his only interest now is in Hadaly's transcendent beauty, which contains the transforming wisdom of the past (the works of the great poets) and of the future (the knowledge of the beings who exist in potential in the crucible).[125] Although Alicia and Hadaly were both lost in the destruction of The Wonderful with its rather too obvious name, Ewald informs Edison: "Ami, c'est de Hadaly seule que je suis inconsolable--et je ne prends le deuil que de cette ombre" (L'Eve, 426). We should recall Ewald's words to Edison early in the novel:

> la durée de la beauté la plus radieuse, ne fût-elle que d'un éclair, si je meurs, en subissant cet éclair, en aura-t-il été moins éternel pour moi? Peu importe ce que dure la beauté pourvu qu'elle soit apparue! (L'Eve, 62)[126]

Although Ewald has Alicia in mind when he says this, the passage is just as appropriate to his experience later with Hadaly.

Villiers has subtly prepared his readers for the disappearence of Hadaly from the opening pages of his novel. He has set his story in the times of transition that suggest death and endings: L'Eve future opens at sunset on an autumn day, moves through a solar eclipse, and concludes in the winter time (see pages 12-13, 361, 426). The setting relates to Hadaly's disappearance in two separate ways. It suggests, first of all, what Yeats terms "the autumn of the body," that world weariness and disillusionment with "externality" that he felt was manifest in Villiers's work as "a thirst for that hour when all things shall pass away like a cloud."[127] From this perspective, Hadaly as material android must disappear from the earth before Ewald can achieve philosophical coagulation with Hadaly as occult spirit. Only when Hadaly and Ewald are both "transfigured to pure substance" like Yeats's Baile and Aillinn will they be truly united in philosophical coagulation: when such transformed bodies join,

> There is no touching here, nor touching there,
> Nor straining joy, but whole is joined to whole;
> For the intercourse of angels is a light
> Where for its moment both seem lost, consumed. (Poems, 555)

The setting of L'Eve future also suggests the decadence of a time when the majority of men are, in Hadaly's words, "ivres de Raison, affolés par toutes les boîtes de jouets dont se paye l'âge mûr de l'Humanité qui entre en automne" (L'Eve, 380-81).[128] Such a world is not in the right time and state for receiving the incarnation of the ideal. Since the ideal reveals itself only to those receptive to its manifestation, in a dying world dominated by the goddess of reason and progress, only a select few who are not "décapités de la notion du Dieu" (L'Eve, 381) can experience the divine. Ewald is among this elite. For all others, "ces insoucieux du Ciel, ces amputés de la Foi, ces déserteurs d'eux-mêmes" (L'Eve, 381; emphasis mine), contact with the ideal is forbidden. Thus Hadaly is brought to life in the isolation of Edison's laboratory behind the electrified walls of Menlo Park and shielded from the prying eyes of the crass and mercenary public;[129] and thus, when Ewald accepts her, they set out together on a peregrinatio that is meant to conclude in the isolation of the château d'Athelwold, "ce brumeux domaine, entouré de forêts de pins, de lacs déserts et de vastes rochers" (L'Eve, 153; see also 56-57).

At Athelwold, in the splendour of an Elizabethan suite decorated with marvellous works of art, Ewald intends to establish a shrine in which to worship Hadaly, "l'Idole" with the "adorables" feet of silver (L'Eve, 153, 266, 279). Should anyone who is not a member of the elite devoted to beauty and the ideal approach Hadaly there, his act of trespass will be seen as a fatal violation of her sanctuary: Hadaly is armed with a dagger and she will use it to defend herself

> si, pendant un éloignement de son seigneur, quelque visiteur tentait d'abuser de son apparent sommeil. Elle ne pardonne pas la plus légère offense; elle ne reconnaît que son élu. (L'Eve, 165)

As the incarnation of the Ideal, Hadaly poses a threat not only to trespassers who pass the threshold of her temple uninvited, but also to initiates. Edison and Ewald both recognize that to choose Hadaly over the ordinary course of man's mortal life is constantly to court two dangers: "la démence et Dieu" (L'Eve, 154). To choose Hadaly is to plunge into the abyss where awaits either the transforming unity with self that brings immortality and transcendence to the eternal and infinite, or the total annihilation of death plain and simple, for whatever else characterizes her, Hadaly, like the Leanhaun Shee, is associated with death. We have already seen that Hadaly exudes an odour of asphodels, the flower of the underworld (L'Eve, 394); the first time she meets Ewald, she is veiled in mourning and gives him "une immortelle d'or" (L'Eve, 114), a flower symbolic of death and immortality; and most strikingly, when Hadaly travels on The Wonderful she does so in an ebony casket upholstered in black satin (L'Eve, 152). All these details serve to emphasize that initiation involves renunciation of the old life, the death of the profane. Like Axël and Forgael, Ewald opts for the abyss, come what may:

> J'essayerai de tenter l'Impossible: oui, j'y amènerai cette illusoire apparition, cette espérance galvanisée! Et, ne pouvant plus aimer, ni désirer, ni posséder l'autre [Alicia], --l'autre fantôme, --je souhaite que cette forme déserte [Hadaly] puisse devenir l'abîme tristement contemplé aux vertiges duquel s'abandonneront mes derniers rêves. (L'Eve, 153)[130]

That empty form is for Villiers the image of art and its most perfect vehicle, the symbol, for as Conyngham points out, "Hadaly est . . . le symbole d'un symbole."[131] To conclude this chapter and continue the discussion of art as alchemy begun in my first chapter, I shall briefly examine Villiers's concept of the symbol as embodied in Hadaly.

The Homunculus as Symbol

For Villiers, a symbol is, like Hadaly, "UNE dualité" of "material" and "immaterial" components transformed into a unity that is more than the simple sum of its parts. The exterior or material aspect of the symbol has a certain intrinsic worth (Hadaly's body is composed of precious metals, etc.), but its true value lies in its power to suggest an immaterial something beyond itself: Hadaly is "la Législatrice 'évidente' de l'*inintelligible, informe et inévitable* INFINI" (*L'Eve*, 381).[132]

Villiers emphasizes the importance to the symbol of the material component or image when Edison points out that Hadaly is able to understand and discuss such abstract ideas as infinity, "mais elle ne les traduit que par l'impression toute singulière, pour ainsi dire, que ses paroles en laissent dans l'esprit à l'aide d'images" (*L'Eve*, 310). The image is necessary because, like the mysterious spirits in the crucible described in the chapter "Figures dans la nuit," the abstract or immaterial component that Yeats terms a "mood" or "an infinite emotion, a perfected emotion, a part of the Divine Essence,"[133] has no physical form of its own through which to communicate.[134]

Because the image has significance in its own right, the symbol works as though in a centripetal manner, focussing attention on *itself*. The air of mystery that surrounds the veiled android when she first appears arouses Ewald's curiosity and draws him to Hadaly. Edison's explanations of how his invention works literally take Ewald and Villiers's readers *into* the symbol. By thus directing us into the image, rather than away from it to an external referent, the symbol creates a value in addition to (but not instead of) its original one:

> Le mécanisme électrique de Hadaly n'est pas plus *elle*—que l'ossature de votre amie n'est *sa personne*. Bref, ce n'est ni telle articulations, ni tel nerf, ni tel os, ni tel muscle que l'on aime en une femme, je crois; mais l'ensemble seul de son être, pénétré de son fluide organique, alors que, nous regardant avec ses yeux, elle

> transfigure tout cet assemblage de minéraux, de métaux et de végétaux fusionnés et sublimés en son corps.
>
> L'unité, en un mot, qui enveloppe ces moyens de rayonnement est seule mystérieuse. (*L'Eve*, 157)

Hadaly remains a valuable piece of machinery, but as Edison himself admits, there is more to her than he can explain: "si j'ai fourni physiquement ce qu'elle a de terrestre, et d'illusoire, une Ame qui m'est inconnue s'est superposée à mon oeuvre" (*L'Eve*, 418).

The symbol functions in this way because of the relation between its image and mood. In a very real sense, the symbolic image is an embodiment of the form of the mood in one particular way.[135] Hadaly *is* the incarnation of the Ideal. Her beauty *is* divine. The duality from which she originated is transformed into a unity; the discrepancy between body and soul--between image and mood--that marked Alicia is absent from her replacement. Conyngham draws attention to the following passage in the garden scene between Ewald and Hadaly:

> Il lui prit la main: c'était la main d'Alicia! Il respira le cou, le sein oppressé de la vision: c'était bien Alicia! Il regarda les yeux... c'étaient bien les yeux... seulement le regard était sublime! La toilette, l'allure,... --et ce mouchoir dont elle essuyait, en silence, deux larmes sur ses joues liliales, --c'était bien elle encore... mais transfigurée! devenue, enfin, digne de sa beauté même: l'identité idéalisée. (*L'Eve*, 372-73)[136]

Hadaly as symbolic image is what Suzanne K. Langer terms "*universalium in re*."[137] The preposition *in* is important: the symbol embodies the *universalium*. Image and mood are one and the same thing.[138] The symbol, therefore, cannot be paraphrased or translated into any other form. It is an indivisible whole which does not "mean" in the conventional sense, but simply *is*. For this reason, Hadaly asks Ewald not to examine her analytically, but to accept her existence on faith:

> Admets mon mystère tel qu'il t'apparaît. Toute explication (oh! si facile!) en serait, sous un peu d'analyse, plus mystérieuse encore, peut-être, que lui-même, hélas! mais serait, en toi, mon anéantissement. --Ne préfères-tu pas que je sois? --Alors, ne raisonne point mon être: subis-le délicieusement. (L'Eve, 385)[139]

As symbol, Hadaly is a transfiguration or epiphany.[140] Too close an examination will destroy her mysterious unity, will rob her of her divine beauty. This is what happens with the nightingale's song when Ewald discovers how it is produced: Hadaly's prophecy that "Dieu se retirerait du chant" (L'Eve, 189) comes true.

For Villiers, a symbol is not something that exists in and by itself, but something that is created at a particular moment by the attitude of an individual symbolizer. Hadaly as occult spirit has an independent existence in the crucible, but her physical nature depends on Edison's imaginative and technical talents, and her subjective reality as symbol depends on Ewald's perceptions of her. "Le Beau," Villiers tells us,

> est, de sa nature, un et infini. Ses manifestations sont aussi multiples que les étoiles du ciel. Tout sujet lui est bon: tout moyen lui est possible: toute mèche peut brûler en ce flambeau, pour produire la lumière.[141]

Given this, almost any object can be a symbol if viewed in the appropriate manner, for as Edison points out, "l'usage que l'on fait d'une chose la rebaptise et la transfigure" (L'Eve, 124).[142]

Life, thought, language, beauty, art, and the symbol are, for Villiers, relative to the individual.[143] When, in "Peintures décoratives du foyer de l'Opéra," Villiers asks how one is to recognize true Beauty, the answer is "Si vous ne l'avez pas en vous-même, vous ne le reconnaîtrez nulle part."[144] Thus Edison concludes that even had he been able to capture the great moments of history and pre-history in photographs and phonograph recordings, their significance would still have been lost on the masses of modern man, "puisque toute pensée n'est, de siècle en siècle, que selon l'être qui la réfléchit" (L'Eve, 26). Modern man might be able to see the images or hear the sounds, but because he is slave to reason and, therefore, lacks the essential "En dedans créateur" (L'Eve, 26), he would not grasp the true meaning of which the photograph images and phonograph sounds are merely the exterior veil.

Although this veil may, as in the case of Hadaly and Ewald, serve to draw attention to the image and then through it bring the appropriate symbolizer to focus on the mood embodied, it may also function as a mask behind which the mood is hidden from those who are either unwilling or unable to penetrate the veil. Since the process and the individual are so important to the existence of the symbol, if a particular person does not choose to view an image as a symbol, it is not one, at least not for him. It is vital, therefore, that Ewald believe in Hadaly, for the existence of the symbol depends on the symbolizer who, in a very real sense, creates it and, through the interpretation he gives to it, assigns it its meaning or value.

By taking the appropriate attitude to the image the symbolizer undergoes an experience which makes him aware of a new emotion, value, or idea created by the symbol. This mood is simultaneously open and limited. The symbol does not in itself have a set reference. Like Hadaly who, being impersonal (L'Eve, 385), contains all women in potential, the mood of the symbol is "multiple . . . comme le monde des rêves" (L'Eve, 168). The symbol is, in Gilbert Durand's words, an almost "inépuisable épiphanie,"[145] the limitations of which are imposed only by the formal relationship between image and mood (Hadaly is incarnate in the form of Alicia and her double, the Venus Victrix), and of the person symbolizing. It is to minimize as much as possible the limitations arising from the symbolizer that Hadaly asks Ewald not to awaken in her any of her potential multitude of harem women (L'Eve, 385).[146]

Although the symbol, because it has no precise external referent, does not mean in the ordinary sense of the word, this does not imply that it is worthless or unimportant. On the contrary, the symbol has what Suzanne Langer terms "import."[147] This import is the transfiguration or epiphany mentioned earlier--the concrete manifestation of the abstract. It is also the symbolizer's experience of the symbol itself, for without a witness there is no epiphany. The value or import of Hadaly is her very existence, short as it may have been, her manifestation to Ewald, and his acceptance of the revelation. This acceptance involves Ewald's focussing on Hadaly and consciously agreeing to allow her imaginary or illusory world to assume a "reality" of its own, without questioning its truth. The process of transforming illusion into reality involves willing suspension of disbelief and results in what Suzanne Langer terms "virtual" experience.[148] The experience is virtual in that it is a product of the imagination, but it is nonetheless a real experience, for it arises from confrontation with a concrete object (Hadaly), and it has an effect on Ewald, adding to the reality he has encountered and changing his perception of, and relations with, the real world.[149] Edison reminds Ewald: "La ligne de l'Equateur terrestre n'existe pas: elle est! Toujours idéale, imaginaire, --et cependant aussi réelle que si elle était tangible" (L'Eve, 280).

If any object may be a symbol when viewed in the appropriate manner and it is the percipient who, in the last resort, creates the symbol and determines its import, what happens when someone, a poet perhaps, sets out deliberately to produce a symbol? He is, of course, a symbolizer himself, a creator of symbols, but how does he share his "virtual experience" with others--how does he persuade others to approach an object as a symbol in the first place and, then, to arrive at the import or mood he has in mind? He must provide clues or guideposts. If a symbol is to be recognized as such by others, there must be something striking about its form, something unusual that sets it apart from non-symbols. In Hadaly's case, the miracle of her existence, the mystery that surrounds her, and her divine beauty when she assumes Alicia's form, all mark her as special and lead one to suspect she is a symbol.

Once we look at Hadaly as a symbol, we still have the problem of determining her import. The author guides our symbolization in the direction he desires by paying close attention to the form of the symbol, pruning elements that might mislead and assuring that all details are appropriate, since everything contributes to the overall effect and thus ultimately to the creation of the symbol and its import.[150] Hadaly herself describes the process in a passage quoted earlier; she tells Ewald how she manipulated her way into existence:

> Je m'appelais en la pensée de qui me créait, de sorte qu'en croyant seulement agir de lui-même il m'obéissait aussi obscurément. Ainsi, me suggérant, par son entremise, dans le monde sensible, je me suis saisie de tous les objets qui m'ont semblé le mieux appropriés au dessein de te ravir. (L'Eve, 383)

As a result, those objects are transformed from mere physical detail into a new whole that, as symbolic image, suggests a special mood. The unity of image and mood becomes the incarnation of all the things that Hadaly is, including a manifestation of ideal Beauty.

> Le Beau, c'est l'Art, lui-même: la Vérité, la sanction, le but. Hors lui, nous ne voyons plus que la Vie et ses non-valeurs intimes au-dessus desquelles l'Art a précisément pour mission de nous élever sous peine de déserter sa destinée.[151]

CHAPTER FOUR

THE GREAT WHEEL: THE LATER YEATS

Introduction: Genesis of Yeats's Vision

In the opening section of his Notes to The Resurrection, Yeats provides a brief chronological outline of his early works (Plays, 932-33). As he discusses the structure of these works and identifies the impetus from which they sprang, a pattern emerges. In each work, "haunted" by "abstractions," the poet has sought freedom from their persecution by recourse to images. Different as these images may appear on the surface, they all give voice to the "myth" that has preoccupied Yeats from boyhood--a "myth that was itself a reply to a myth"--to the modern myth of progress. In one of his earliest poems, "The Wanderings of Oisin," for example, the images suggest "eternal pursuit," destruction, and recurrence. Even the images that he has rejected, Yeats recalls, were "intended to prove that all life rose and fell as in my poem."

As Yeats moved towards works like "Rosa Alchemica" and "The Adoration of the Magi" the images changed their outer garments, but not their inner nature. Change belongs to earthly existence, progress does not. "Our civilization was about to reverse itself," Yeats wrote in his Notes to The Resurrection, "or some new civilization about to be born from all that our age had rejected." His struggle with abstraction in On Baile's Strand, Yeats recalls, was won only by making his characters "all image." Although he confesses that he "can no longer remember" exactly what they mean, he does know that the images represent "in some sense those combatant who turn the wheel of life."

At about the time he was writing On Baile's Strand, the image of "laughing, ecstatic destruction" that later became the apocalyptic beast of "The Second Coming" began to keep Yeats company. Then came Where There is Nothing with its images of ruin and its theme of "spiritual anarchy." It was followed, according to Yeats, by "the thought that a man always tried to become his opposite, to become what he would abhor if he did not desire it." This abstract idea, elaborated in Per Amica Silentia Lunae, obsessed Yeats until he managed to embody it in the images of his farce The Player Queen.

Although at the start Yeats's images might not have been chosen "because of any theory, but because [he] found them impressive," the pull towards abstraction remained strong and a theory gradually evolved. Behind the collected images, a special view of reality began to take shape, based on the dialectic of opposites that had fascinated Yeats since his youth.[1] The conflict of opposites and their perpetual transformation one into the other, Yeats believed, are what make the world go round. Finally, the pattern of recurrence and modified cyclic return, of oppositions in dynamic tension, of destruction and new life rising from the ruins of the old culminated in "a symbolical system displaying the conflict in all its forms."

Although Yeats felt himself plagued by abstraction, the system he elaborates in such detail in A Vision and the works that surround it does not draw its main impetus from philosophical sources, for, "apart from two or three of the principal Platonic Dialogues," before writing the first version of A Vision, Yeats tells us, he "knew no philosophy" (A Vision, 12).[2] His system is, on the contrary, an attempt to "give concrete expression" to the abstract thought that was ultimately the creation of his and his wife's subconscious (their "Daimons") (A Vision, 12, 22). The concrete realities of Yeats's own personal experience, his self observation and his readings in history and biography all helped to shape his system.[3] He was aware, for instance, of a number of opposing elements and conflicting desires in his own character and in that of friends and acquaintances. From these conflicts and oppositions Yeats inferred that corresponding oppositions and attractions must operate universally.

In a number of poems we see Yeats exploring the conflicts within himself. Because "Between extremities/Man runs his course" (Poems, 499), among other oppositions, Yeats ponders the pull between hatred and desire--"That crafty demon and that loud beast/That plague me day and night" (Poems, 399)--between "Perfection of the life, or of the work" (Poems, 495), between heart, body, or self (earthly life), and soul (death and after-life)(Poems, 477-79, 499-503).

Yeats's most sustained poetic exploration of "All those antinomies" (Poems, 500) is "Vacillation." In this poem, after examining the pull of contraries and considering both sides of the debate between the two aspects of life represented here under the images of the Soul and the Heart, Yeats opts for the latter:[4]

> I--though heart might find relief
> Did I become a Christian man and choose for my belief
> What seems most welcome in the tomb--play a predestined part.
> Homer is my example and his unchristened heart.
> The lion and the honeycomb, what has Scripture said?
> (Poems, 503)

The answer to the question, of course, is that out of corruption and decay come sweetness and life.[5] Although he might in some respects prefer the miraculous incorruptibility associated with the things of the Soul and represented in the poem by the undecayed body of Saint Teresa, Yeats must, nevertheless, ground his life and work in the mortal world of corruption which he later characterizes as "the foul rag-and-bone shop of the heart"--for "What theme" he asks "had Homer but original sin?" (Poems, 630, 502). Still Yeats feels the pull towards the reality represented by the Soul, and although he dismisses Christian theologian Friedrich Von Hügel and all that he stands for, he does so with a certain regret (Poems, 503).

One opposition in particular attracts Yeats's attention in poem after poem. It is found in some of his earliest works, including "The Wanderings of Oisin," and continues as a theme as late as "Politics," written, according to A. Norman Jeffares, in May of 1938.[6] The opposition is the fundamental one between youth and old age and all that Yeats associates with them, including, on the one hand, the body, sensuality and generation, ignorance, vigour, life and mortality, nature, the objective, external world and, on the other, the soul, intellect and transcendence, wisdom, decay, death and immortality, imagination and the subjective, internal world.

Like most of the oppositions Yeats presents in his work, that between youth and old age is complicated by the fact that Yeats vacillates between the two extremities. He may, as in "The Tower," rage against

> this caricature,
> Decrepit age that has been tied to me
> As to a dog's tail. (_Poems_, 409)

Age grants him "Excited, passionate, fantastical/Imagination" (_Poems_, 409) but denies the physical capacity to realize that imagination. He may, in more temperate moods, give voice as he does in "Politics" to a humorous lamentation over the loss of his youth; or he may rejoice in the "sweetness" of knowledge "that mere growing old" has brought, since "bodily decrepitude is wisdom" (_Poems_, 401, 523).

Yeats recognizes that degenerative transformation of the body is an inevitable consequence of terrestrial existence for all except those who, like Robert Gregory, die young. Much as he may at times appreciate the wisdom that comes when one has "withered to a bag of bones" (_Poems_, 401), Yeats frequently rebels against the restrictions old age imposes and yearns for freedom from them. The search for relief from the negative aspects of mortality that, with time, transform man into "a paltry thing,/A tattered coat upon a stick" (_Poems_, 407), leads Yeats to visualize a number of possible solutions to the human dilemma. These solutions fall into two main categories, one involving a perpetual return to mortal life, the other an escape from it. Both types of solution reply to negative transformation by means of positive.

Reincarnation and the Alchemical Process

Yeats's system is founded upon two basic premises that are essentially one: in Michael Robartes' words, "that the soul survives the body," and "that civilisations come to an end"--"Or transformation," Owen Aherne corrects--"when they have given all their light like burned-out wicks" (A Vision, 50). Yeats found one source of hope, then, in the transforming power of reincarnation:

> A man awaits his end
> Dreading and hoping all;
> Many times he died,
> Many times rose again. (Poems, 476)

Although Yeats explores Tír-na-n-Og as an image of the after-life, in his earlier writings his interest in the persistence of the soul is confined primarily to the fact of its survival and reincarnation. As he grows older, however, the exact nature of that survival and the process leading to reincarnation become more important. It is no longer sufficient for the poet simply to know that

> Birth is heaped on birth . . .
> Or, as great sages say,
> Men dance on deathless feet. (Poems, 496)

From Yeats's search for understanding of the after-life and the path leading to rebirth comes his theory of the Great Wheel of existence which itself encompasses wheels within wheels. Because the soul in its circuit from life to life is called to "Cradle upon cradle" (Poems, 376) and each incarnation is different, though animated by the one soul, Yeats chooses as his central image for existence the phases of the moon. According to Yeats, the soul's successive incarnations are not randomly chosen, but proceed in an ordered progression through a set sequence corresponding to the changes of the moon:

> Twenty-and-eight the phases of the moon,
> The full and the moon's dark and all the crescents,
> Twenty-and-eight, and yet but six-and-twenty
> The cradles that a man must needs be rocked in,
> For there's no human life at the full or the dark. (Poems, 373)

The characteristics of each phase are determined by the relative dominance of one or the other member of several sets of opposing forces, for like the waters of the ocean, the soul is subject to contrary attractions which, in keeping with his central metaphor, Yeats terms solar and lunar. The solar force or "primary tincture" Yeats characterizes as objective and, on Kant's authority, identifies with space; the lunar or "antithetical tincture" he calls subjective and identifies with time (A Vision, 71-72).[7] Yeats explains his association of subjective with antithetical and objective with primary in this way: the subjective is called antithetical "because it is achieved and defended by continual conflict with its opposite," the objective, which is called primary "because whereas subjectivity--in Empedocles 'Discord' as I think--tends to separate man from man, objectivity brings us back to the mass where we begin" (A Vision, 71, 72), in alchemical terms, back to the prima materia.

When the primary tincture dominates, the pull is centrifugal: the soul is attracted to the objective realities of the external world, to all that is outside the individual:

> The soul remembering its loneliness
> Shudders in many cradles; all is changed,
> It would be the world's servant. . . . (Poems, 375-76)

Thus it is reincarnated as

> Reformer, merchant, statesman, learned man,
> Dutiful husband, honest wife by turn. . . . (Poems, 376)

Yeats associates the primary tincture with sunlight and the dark of the moon; Phase 1, when the new moon is invisible, is the central primary phase. "Choosing whatever task's most difficult/Among tasks not impossible" (Poems, 376), the soul that serves the world and the god that is external to itself

> takes
> Upon the body and upon the soul
> The coarseness of the drudge. (Poems, 376)

The primary phases of the moon, particularly as they approach Phase 1, are marked by abstraction, "wisdom's chatter" (Poems, 377), and deformity of body.

When the antithetical tincture, associated with night and the full of the moon, dominates, the pull is centripetal: the soul is attracted to the subjective realm of the self, to the "inner world of desire and imagination" (A Vision, 73); it is beauty that is desired and imagined. As it approaches Phase 15, the focal phase of the antithetical tincture,

> The soul begins to tremble into stillness,
> To die into the labyrinth of itself! (Poems, 374)

Terrestrial life is sustained by the tension and interrelationship of contraries. When the tension is broken and one of the contraries dominates completely to the exclusion of the other as happens in Phases 1 and 15, then the soul is "cast beyond the verge" of earthly life into a supernatural state, for human existence is impossible at the polar extremities, the "two eternities" of pure time and pure space, pure subjectivity and pure objectivity (Poems, 376, 637). Souls in these supernatural states have characteristics peculiar to their conditions in the crucibles of time and space.

In Phase 1 the centrifugal pull is so strong that the souls have no power over themselves. They have become completely passive and plastic:

> Mind has become indifferent to good and evil, to truth and falsehood; body has become undifferentiated, dough-like; the more perfect be the soul, the more indifferent the mind, the more dough-like the body; and mind and body take whatever shape, accept whatever image is imprinted upon them, transact whatever purpose is imposed upon them, are indeed the instruments of supernatural manifestation, the final link between the living and more powerful beings. (A Vision, 183)

In this phase, the body is completely absorbed in its supernatural environment and as a result is deformed. Lacking will and desire of their own, souls in Phase 1 are moulded by forces outside themselves:

> having no desire they cannot tell
> What's good or bad, or what it is to triumph
> At the perfection of one's own obedience;
> And yet they speak what's blown into the mind;
> Deformed beyond deformity, unformed,
> Insipid as the dough before it is baked,
> They change their bodies at a word. (Poems, 376)[8]

This word is not, however, uttered by the souls in Phase 1, for they are puppets and "automatic" (A Vision, 184):

> Constrained, arraigned, baffled, bent and unbent
> By these wire-jointed jaws and limbs of wood,
> Themselves obedient,
> Knowing not evil and good;
>
> Obedient to some hidden magical breath. (Poems, 382)

Souls in the crucible of Phase 1 bear striking resemblances to Villiers's automaton, Hadaly, before her body has been moulded into Alicia's shape by Annie Anderson's art and Edison's technology, and before her spirit has been given its own free will and desires by Ewald's faith and acceptance.

In Phase 15, the centripetal pull is so strong that the soul is completely self-absorbed and alone with its thought (A Vision, 136):

body and soul
Estranged amid the strangeness of themselves,
Caught up in contemplation. . . . (Poems, 375)

All concern for others and all desire are gone (A Vision, 136); the soul has found the self it sought and serves only it. The body inhabited by the soul is the beauty imagined and desired and, thus,

> possesses the greatest possible beauty, being indeed that body which the soul will permanently inhabit, when all its phases have been repeated according to the number allotted: that which we call the clarified or Celestial Body. (A Vision, 136)

There is no earthly incarnation at this phase because it is the phase of complete beauty; body and soul are

Too perfect at the full to lie in a cradle,
Too lonely for the traffic of the world:
Body and soul cast out and cast away
Beyond the visible world. (Poems, 374)

Souls in the crucible of Phase 15 resemble Hadaly after her transformation from "le vague de l'ébauche" (L'Eve, 293) into the completed image of Alicia's divine beauty. When Ewald accepts Hadaly, they are joined in a mystic union that excludes both the world and sexuality--a symbol of all desire. Phase 15 is the phase which most resembles the ideal state of transcendence and so I will return to it later in this chapter.

As part of the Great Wheel, the supernatural states of Phases 1 and 15 provide only temporary respite from the cycle of reincarnation. Whether or not the soul is "content to live it all again/And yet again" (Poems, 479), it must, for soon the attraction for the opposite pole is felt once more and the cycle continues: on "the wagon-wheel/Of beauty's cruelty and wisdom's chatter" the soul "is drawn betwixt/Deformity of body and of mind" (Poems, 377).

If some souls regret "Being caught between the pull/Of the dark moon and the full" (Poems, 384), others rejoice in the series of transformations they undergo, giving thanks that

"I have been a king,
I have been a slave,
~~Nor~~ is there anything,
Fool, rascal, knave,
That I have not been,
And yet upon my breast,
A myriad heads have lain." (Poems, 495-96)

Those who in one life are forced to forego satisfaction, may find it in the next:

Old lovers yet may have
All that time denied--
Grave is heaped on grave
That they be satisfied. . . . (Poems, 496)

Before it can return to this life to seek fulfilment of its desires, however, the soul must undergo a process of purgation. In a series of stages it is cleansed of the impediments of its past life and prepared for rebirth into its future. Yeats tells us that

> There are two realities, the terrestrial and the condition of fire. All power is from the terrestrial condition, for there all opposites meet and there only is the extreme of choice possible, full freedom. And there the heterogeneous is, and evil, for evil is the strain one upon another of opposities; but in the condition of fire is all music and all rest. Between is the condition of air.[9]

The three conditions of existence correspond to three states of the soul described in the Upanishads: "that of waking, that of dreaming, that of dreamless sleep," and are, respectively, the "sunlit" state of incarnate life, the time between birth and death; the "twilit" state of discarnate life, the time between death and birth; and the "state of pure light or of utter darkness, according to our liking," the eternity when birth and death are no more (A Vision, 220). Without saying anything more about it at the moment, I would like simply to draw attention to the description of the condition of fire as being "all music and all rest."

It is in the "condition of air," in that crucible in which "The Pestle of the moon/. . . pounds up all anew" (Poems, 346), that the soul undergoes its purgation in a process bearing striking parallels to that of alchemy.

Yeats tells us that

> The whole system [of A Vision] is founded upon the belief that the ultimate reality, symbolised as the Sphere, falls in human consciousness, as Nicholas of Cusa was the first to demonstrate, into a series of antinomies. (A Vision, 187)

It is not surprising, therefore, to discover that the soul's existence is governed by two sets of mirror opposites which Yeats terms the Faculties and the Principles. The Four Faculties are "man's voluntary and acquired powers and their objects," or "what man has made in a past or present life" (A Vision, 187, 71). Naturally enough, the Faculties are restricted to the period between birth and death. The Four Principles, however, exist not only during life but also in the period between lives, for they are "what makes man," the givens, "the innate ground of the Faculties" (A Vision, 71, 187). Two of the Principles, Husk and Passionate Body, prevail during life, and two, Spirit and Celestial Body prevail between lives.

Unlike the Faculties, the Principles have no power to create, but they do "reveal reality" and "inform the Faculties" (A Vision, 188, 207),

> For wisdom is the property of the dead,
> A something incompatible with life; and power,
> Like everything that has the stain of blood,
> A property of the living. . . . (Poems, 482)

The two pairs of Principles stand in a form of opposition to each other and within each pair, the individual Principles are antithetical. Husk and Passionate Body are, respectively, "sense (impulse, images; hearing, seeing, etc., images that we associate with ourselves--the ear, the eye, etc.) and the objects of sense" or the past and the present (A Vision, 188, 191). Spirit and Celestial Body, on the other hand, are "mind and its object (the Divine Ideas in their unity)," or the future and the timeless (A Vision, 187, 191-92).

The purgative process that prepares the soul for rebirth begins at death, the moment corresponding to calcination, the first stage in alchemical transmutation. It is at this point in the alchemical process that the "humide radicale," the life force joining form and matter, body and soul, evaporates; with "la mort du profane,"[10] the soul renounces the material world and crosses the threshold into the Temple of the Magnum Opus where it will undergo the transformations that culminate in a rebirth into a new existence.

The process of transformation in its initial stages relies heavily on the individual's memory of the life just lived, for we carry our memory with us between lives and "that memory is for a time our external world."[11] The first state after death Yeats calls "The Vision of the Blood Kindred." He describes it as

> a vision of all those bound to us through Husk and Passionate Body. Apparitions seen at the moment of death are part of the vision, a synthesis, before disappearance, of all the impulses and images which constitute the Husk. (A Vision, 223)

This is the state Villiers's Claire Lenoir is in when, just moments after her death, Tribulat Bonhomet examines her retina with his ophthalmoscope and discovers imprinted there "un tableau que toute langue, morte ou vivante . . . est, sous le soleil et la lune, hors d'état d'exprimer."[12]

The Vision of the Blood Kindred corresponds to the second stage of the alchemical process, putrefaction, the stage marked by disintegration and isolation. Piobb's description of putrefaction is particularly interesting in this context; it is, he says, "destruction de la nature ancienne, cet abandon des manières de voir qu'on avait jusqu'ici."[13] Helen Hennessey Vendler compares the Vision of the Blood Kindred to "Orpheus' last look at the world before the descent into Hades, a last glance at things in their 'real' rather than imaginative relations."[14] We should remember that in alchemy, reinvolvement with the profane after the death of the profane is a necessary step in the transformational process. In Chapter One we saw that Sara and Axël both follow their renunciations of the world with a temporary return to it, rejecting the spiritual (represented on the one hand by the archdeacon and the convent and, on the other, by Janus) in favour of the material (represented by the buried treasure).[15] The eventual outcome of the reinvolvement with the profane is, however, its renunciation. The Vision of the Blood Kindred and the next state in the soul's progress between death and birth so steep the soul in images of the world it has left behind that it reaches satiation and is only too happy to renounce the "profane."

The Vision of the Blood Kindred is followed by the Meditation, the state which most interested Yeats, not only in A Vision, but also in his poetry and drama. The Meditation consists of three stages: the *Dreaming Back*, the *Return*, and the *Phantasmagoria*. The object of the Meditation is "the *Spirit's* separation from the *Passionate Body*, considered as nature, and from the *Husk* considered as pleasure and pain" (*A Vision*, 226). This is a state of self-knowledge leading to renunciation and corresponds to alchemical solution, the "loosening" when

> chez le sujet évoluant, "se décomposent," selon le latin, les éléments constitutifs de l'être, où, comme disent les Alchimistes philosophes, "*l'esprit se sépare du corps*," donc où l'âme, avec *l'intelligence* qui l'exprime, prend son essor.[16]

We have seen that Janus urges Axël to undergo this stage of transmutation with the plea, "songe à développer dans la *méditation*, à purifier, au feu des épreuves et des sacrifices, l'influx infini de ta volonté!" (*Axël*, 198; emphasis mine).

Although the Husk and Passionate Body disappear as a result of the Meditation, they "may persist in some simulacrum of themselves" for centuries:

> If the *Husk* so persist, the *Spirit* still continues to feel pleasure and pain, remains a fading distortion of living man, perhaps a dangerous succuba or incubus, living through the senses and nerves of others. If there has been great animal egotism, heightened by some moment of tragedy, the *Husk* may persist for centuries, recalled into a sort of life, and united to its *Spirit*, at some anniversary, or by some unusually susceptible person or persons connected with its past life. (*A Vision*, 224)

On the other hand, if the Passionate Body persists, the Spirit undergoes the Dreaming Back, a period in which it is

> compelled to live over and over again the events that had most moved it; there can be nothing new, but the old events stand forth in a light which is dim or bright

> according to the intensity of the passion that accompanied them. They occur in the order of their intensity or luminosity, the more intense first, and the painful are commonly the more intense, and repeat themselves again and again. (A Vision, 226)[17]

It is to the Dreaming Back that Yeats refers in "News for the Delphic Oracle":

> Straddling each a dolphin's back
> And steadied by a fin,
> The Innocents re-live their death,
> Their wounds open again. (Poems, 612)

The Spirit in the Dreaming Back becomes "happier as the more painful and, therefore, more intense" events of its past life "wear themselves away" (Plays, 777). Released from pleasure and pain, the Spirit enters the Return in which it lives back

> through past events in the order of their occurrence, because it is compelled by the Celestial Body to trace every passionate event to its cause until all are related and understood, turned into knowledge, made a part of itself. (A Vision, 226)

The reverse movement of the dream life in the Return, although not specifically mentioned in A Vision, is implied in the name of the stage and explicitly indicated in Autobiographies and in Yeats's Notes to Four Plays for Dancers.[18] In the notes, Yeats quotes the Goatherd's song from "Shepherd and Goatherd" in which the old man describes "the road that the soul treads/When it has vanished from our natural eyes":

> He grows younger every second . . .
> Jaunting, journeying
> To his own dayspring,
> He unpacks the loaded pern
> Of all 'twas pain or joy to learn,
> Of all that he had made. (Poems, 342; Plays, 777)

It is the Return and the next stage of the Meditation that My Self speaks of in "A Dialogue of Self and Soul":

> I am content to follow to its source
> Every event in action or in thought;
> Measure the lot; forgive myself the lot! (Poems, 479)

The final stage of the Meditation completes the Spirit's self-knowledge by turning the Spirit from what was to what would have been and by forcing it to examine the consequences of its past actions. This third stage is "the Phantasmagoria, which exists to exhaust, not nature, not pain and pleasure, but emotion" (A Vision, 230). In the Phantasmagoria, "under the impulse of moral and emotional suffering" the Spirit seeks "to perfect . . . its own emotional or moral peace" (A Vision, 231). Until it is able to accomplish this, it is subjected to the punishment inflicted by its own conscience, for in the period between death and birth thought and imagination are reality.[19] Yeats illustrates the Phantasmagoria with the story from the Japanese Noh play in which the ghost of a girl

> tells a priest of a slight sin, if indeed it was sin, which seems great because of her exaggerated conscience. She is surrounded by flames, and though the priest explains that if she but ceased to believe in those flames they would cease to exist, believe she must, and the play ends in an elaborate dance, the dance of her agony. (A Vision, 231)

The Spirit is released from the Phantasmagoria when, with the assistance of Teaching Spirits, it projects images that aid it in self-forgiveness by completing the physical, moral, and imaginative life disrupted by death, "for only that which is completed can be known and dismissed" (A Vision, 230). "Teaching Spirits are Spirits of the Thirteenth Cone, or their representatives who may be chosen from any state" (A Vision, 229). The Thirteenth Cone is one of the terms Yeats uses to designate the condition of fire, "the ultimate reality" which "can do all things and knows all things," and is "symbolised as a phaseless sphere" (A Vision, 302, 193).[20]

The Teaching Spirits "conduct the Spirit through its past acts" of the life just lived, and sometimes even through the acts of earlier lives (A Vision, 229). Vendler notes that these Spirits "have a suspicious resemblance to the Muse" and belong to "the long tradition of the guide through the wilderness."[21] Although she communicates with a living man and not a Spirit between lives, Hadaly in L'Eve future may be seen as a Teaching Spirit sent by Spirits of the Thirteenth Cone to lead Ewald to self-knowledge.

In order to accomplish the tasks of the Meditation, the unpurified Spirit requires the assistance not only of Teaching Spirits, but also of the living. The Spirit is "capable of knowledge only" (A Vision, 229), all creative power and sensual input being lost with the Faculties at death and with the disappearance of Husk and Passionate Body shortly afterwards. The Spirit must, therefore, rely on "some incarnate Mind" for "the names and words of the drama" it re-enacts or projects in the Meditation, and on the Teaching Spirits for "supersensual emotion and imagery" (A Vision, 227, 226, 229).

Because "A mouth that has no moisture and no breath/Breathless mouths may summon" (Poems, 497), for their contributions, the Teaching Spirits draw on the discarnate, on "the 'unconscious' or unapparent," that which has been stored in the Record of the phaseless sphere, the Great Memory of Anima Mundi, "where the images of past events remain for ever 'thinking the thought and doing the deed'" (A Vision, 229, 193).[22] The living, on the other hand, make their contribution to the Spirit's Meditation through their waking and sleeping mind. The Spirits are able to tap the thoughts of the living because they "inhabit our unconsciousness or, as Swedenborg said, are the Dramatis Personae of our dreams" (A Vision, 227). Thus not only do the actions of the living affect the dead, but the Spirits between lives have an influence on the living, contributing, for example, "the imagery of ordinary sleep" (A Vision, 229), as well as haunting places in which the dead once lived.

In Chapter Three we examined the interaction between the spirit world and the world of the living in L'Eve future and observed Hadaly's need for the creative powers of both Edison and Ewald. With their help she is transformed from discarnate spirit to incarnate being. The Spirits in the state of Meditation are not yet prepared for reincarnation, but once they have moved through all six discarnate states and completed the purgative process, like Hadaly they will be transformed into a new unity of the material and the spiritual.

A number of Yeats's plays and poems are concerned, at least in part, with souls in the state of Meditation. The Dreaming of the Bones is among these. It is set in the Ireland of 1916, in the pre-dawn darkness of a cloudy and moonless night, the time when the shades of the dead are apt to be abroad.[23] From the beginning, Yeats establishes a suggestively spooky atmosphere appropriate to his topic. The First Musician sings of apprehension, of night-wandering rogues and the "dizzy dreams" that "spring/From the dry bones of the dead" (Plays, 763).

A Young Man travelling alone meets a Stranger and Young Girl and is plunged into darkness when, unseen by him the girl blows out the Young Man's lantern. In the dialogue that follows, they speak of the dead who haunt the mountainside "in the hour before the break of day" (Plays, 765), doing penance in a dream:

> And some for an old scruple must hang spitted
> Upon the swaying tops of lofty trees;
> Some are consumed in fire, some withered up
> By hail and sleet out of the wintry North,
> And some but live through their old lives again. (Plays, 766)

These dead are spirits in the state of Meditation, and although the Young Man is unaware of it yet, the strangers he is talking with are of their number; they are two spirits caught in the "self-created winding of the labyrinth of conscience" (Plays, 777), a state that because of the emotional component might be viewed as the Phantasmagoria, but that Yeats seems in his notes on the play to equate with the Dreaming Back.[24] For 700 years the Stranger and the Young Girl, who we learn later are the lovers Diarmuid and Dervorgilla, have undergone a "strange penance" imposed by their own "fantastic conscience" (Plays, 771, 766): "Though eyes can meet, their lips can never meet," for

> when he has bent his head
> Close to her head, or hand would slip in hand,
> The memory of their crime flows up between
> And drives them apart. (Plays, 771, 772)[25]

Their crime was a treasonous one: angry over his defeat at the hands of Dervorgilla's husband, Diarmuid sought revenge by turning against his country and bringing the Normans into Ireland.[26] Because of the public nature of their crime, Diarmuid and Dervorgilla believe they must remain accursed until somebody of their race, a descendant of their original victims, grants them forgiveness. To this end, they approach the Young Man who has just come from participating in the Easter Rising in Dublin. They offer to help him escape from the British by leading him to safety through the nighttime hillsides they haunt. This act is important for the shades of Diarmuid and Dervorgilla, for it constitutes expiation for their crime, an expiation which, Yeats tells us, "because offered to the living for the dead," is very logically called "expiation for the dead" (A Vision, 238).

The expiation is offered to the Young Man as "surrogate or symbol" (A Vision, 238) of the Irish who were conquered by the Normans specifically because he has just been involved in an attempt to rid Ireland of foreign domination.[27] As a freedom fighter, he represents the antithesis of Diarmuid and Dervorgilla, who are drawn to him because he is their opposite. Yeats notes in A Vision that

> Those who inhabit the "unconscious mind" [the discarnate, including souls between lives] are the complement or opposite of that mind's consciousness and are there, unless as messengers of the Thirteenth Cone, because of spiritual affinity or bonds created during past lives. (A Vision, 237; see also A Vision, 230)

The spiritual affinity and bonds in this case include the Young Man's race; his loneliness as he flees the British, "a loneliness akin to the solitude of the shades";[28] and his rash desire for vengeance that leads him to refuse forgiveness to Diarmuid and Dervorgilla.

The Young Man's refusal is foreshadowed early in the play when he comments on the recent fighting:

> In the late Rising
> I think there was no man of us but hated
> To fire at soldiers who but did their duty

> And were not of our race, but when a man
> Is born in Ireland and of Irish stock,
> When he takes part against us--. . . . (Plays, 765)

The Stranger (Diarmuid), recognizing which way the Young Man's thoughts are running and hoping to change his attitude, interrupts him with his promise of safe-conduct to the mountain ridge where he is to await his rescue. Diarmuid and Dervorgilla are nearly successful in arousing the Young Man's sympathy--after they leave, he confesses "I had almost yielded and forgiven it all" (Plays, 775). In the end, however, he cannot forgive them because, as with others between lives, part of their penance is to reverse roles, to become victims where previously they had been perpetrators of their crime.[29]

Diarmuid and Dervorgilla do not actually make a direct request for forgiveness from the Young Man because the forgiveness must come from within themselves and they are not yet ready to move on to the next state in their progress towards reincarnation. The Young Man is unable to release them from their Meditation; they must do this for themselves because they are bound by

> bonds no man could unbind,
> Being imagined within
> The labyrinth of the mind. . . . (Plays, 531)

They are condemned to remain in their self-imposed purgatory because they have not yet achieved the knowledge that must precede self-forgiveness. On the contrary, they persist in the selfish love that excludes all else, the love that "sold their country into slavery" (Plays, 773): because they "have no thought but love,"

> All the ruin,
> All, all their handiwork is blown away
> As though the mountain air had blown i[illegible]ay
> Because their eyes have met. (Plays, 771, 774-75)

But the joy that comes with such love is tainted. The meeting of their eyes brings memory of their crime to Diarmuid and Dervorgilla once more; as in the Japanese Noh play mentioned earlier, The Dreaming of the Bones closes with the ghosts' dance of agony.

While The Dreaming of the Bones is concerned with the Meditation of souls out of Ireland's heroic past, The Words upon the Window-Pane focusses on that of souls from a more proximate period: the eighteenth century. In the notes to this play, Yeats tells us that "Swift haunts me; he is always just round the next corner" and so in an attempt to release both ghost and the living man obsessed with him, Yeats brings back the "dirty old man" in the séance of The Words upon the Window-Pane (Plays, 958, 955).

Here we find the living, in the form of the spiritualist medium, Mrs. Henderson, providing the "names and words of the drama" (A Vision, 226) for the dead, Jonathan Swift.[30] The events come from Swift's life, but his Spirit needs the assistance of the living to give voice to his Dreaming Back: Swift is, in the words of Dr. Trench, another character in the play, one of those "earth-bound" spirits who "think they are still living and go over and over some action of their past lives, just as we go over and over some painful thought, except that where they are thought is reality" (Plays, 944). Dr. Trench continues to explain that "Such spirits do not often come to séances unless those séances are held in houses where those spirits lived, or where the event took place" (Plays, 944). It is significant, then, that the setting for the séance is a house that once belonged to friends of Swift's protegée, Stella, and that the "words upon the window-pane" are lines cut there from a poem written by Stella for Swift's fifty-fourth birthday.

In this play, Yeats portrays Swift in a situation he understands well from personal experience, the situation presented in "The Man and the Echo":

> All that I have said and done,
> Now that I am old and ill,
> Turns into a question till
> I lie awake night after night
> And never get the answers right. (Poems, 632)

Like the Man in the poem, Swift ponders the consequences of his acts and omissions. He wonders if he has been wrong to manipulate the minds and lives of the two women who loved him and to remove them from the natural order and deny them the husbands and children they might have had.

In some respects, at least, the answer to Swift's questions is yes, he was wrong, for Yeats would have it that it is a sin to prevent or refuse experience, since "Our actions, lived in life, or remembered in death, are the food and drink of the Spirits of the Thirteenth Cone" and to prevent experience in life is to starve these Spirits (A Vision, 230, 239).[31] Those who commit this sin must undergo "Victimage" (A Vision, 239). This is Swift's fate, in life and death. Terrified of solitude, of outliving his friends and "himself," he is condemned to the very hell he so feared. Mrs. Henderson and John Corbet describe Swift in old age:

> Mrs. Henderson. I saw him very clearly just as I woke up. His clothes were dirty, his face covered with boils. Some disease had made one of his eyes swell up, it stood out from his face like a hen's egg.

> John Corbet. He looked like that in his old age. Stella had been dead a long time. His brain had gone, his friends had deserted him. The man appointed to take care of him beat him to keep him quiet. (Plays, 955-56)

After death, Swift's Victimage continues as he suffers again through his "passion" (Plays, 945) in the Dreaming Back. Swift's physical appearance in this state, the appearance he had in old age, is a mark of the continuance of the Victimage.

Because thought is reality between lives, like all Spirits in the Meditation, Swift takes the form appropriate to the event or emotion being relived. In The Dreaming of the Bones, Dervorgilla alludes to this phenomenon of discarnate life when she explains that she and Diarmuid

> carry, now that they are dead, the image
> Of their first youth, for it was in that youth
> Their sin began. (Plays, 770)[32]

Mrs. Henderson remarks of the spirits that "Now they are old, now they are young. They change all in a moment as their thought changes" (Plays, 956).[33]

In describing the circumstances of the "earth-bound" spirits reliving their moments of trauma, Dr. Trench comments that "If I were a Catholic I would say that such spirits were in Purgatory" (Plays, 944). Yeats obviously agreed with his character, for he chose Purgatory as the title for one of his last plays. The situation in this drama is a reversal of sorts of that in The Dreaming of the Bones. In the earlier play, the dead appeal unsuccessfully to the living for assistance; in Purgatory the living make an abortive attempt to help the dead.[34]

An Old Man brings his son to the ruins of his ancestral home, which he knows to be haunted by the ghost of his long dead mother. She is a spirit in the Dreaming Back, reliving the transgression that brought ruin on a great house. Lust led her to marry beneath her station and after her death her husband destroyed the estate through dissipation. Eventually her son, the Old Man, murdered his father because "he killed the house," and, as the Old Man proclaims in his author's stead,

> to kill a house,
> Where great men grew up, married, died,
> I here declare a capital offence. (Plays, 1044)

The Old Man became a pedlar and the decline of the house reached its nadir with his son,

> A bastard that a pedlar got
> Upon a tinker's daughter in a ditch. (Plays, 1044)

Now the Old Man has returned to his family home on the anniversary of his parent's wedding, the night of his conception, because he hopes to help his mother escape her purgatory. Spirits in the Meditation

> know at last
> The consequence of those transgressions
> Whether upon others or upon themselves;
> Upon others, others may bring help,
> For when the consequence is at an end
> The dream must end. . . . (Plays, 1042)

Meanwhile the dream has a transforming power, for assisted by the mind of the Old Man, the Mother's imagination has recreated the house and her husband as they were on her wedding night. Her dream is so vivid that it is projected beyond the confines of the discarnate life into the world of the living where it is shared temporarily by the Old

Man and his son. The Old Man cries out to his mother to halt her dream action, but the ghosts of his parents are

> Deaf! Both deaf! If I should throw
> A stick or a stone they would not hear. (Plays, 1046)

They cannot hear because Spirits in the Dreaming Back are alone with their dreams (A Vision, 235). This is why in The Only Jealousy of Emer, the ghost of Cuchulain "cannot hear--being shut off, a phantom/ That can neither touch, nor hear, nor see" (Plays, 547, 549). If the event being relived was originally shared by others, they may be present--but only as "figures of the dream" (A Vision, 228), as projections of the Spirit's imagination. This is the case with the husband in Purgatory, and with Stella and Vanessa in The Words upon the Window-Pane.

Although the mother is unaware of the Old Man's presence, her dream is so affecting that it moves him to action. In an attempt to end the consequences of his mother's transgression and thus to end her Meditation, the Old Man stabs his son. Unfortunately, the Old Man has misunderstood his role in his mother's purgation and mistaken the consequences of her transgression. Vendler explains:

> The Old Man's proper function is to forgive his mother and father, since the real consequence in him of their action is his mad hatred of them both, not the coarse son he has begotten. In killing his son, he is intensifying the consequences of his mother's action, rather than abrogating them.[35]

The mother's dream continues; the Old Man is "Twice a murderer and all for nothing" (Plays, 1049). He and his son are the living parallel of the Phantasmagoria of the mother's Meditation--the completed consequences of her transgression. Since she continues to relive the original events without dreaming of those consequences, despite the fact that "now she knows it all, being dead" (Plays, 1043), the mother has not yet come to the Phantasmagoria. She cannot, therefore, escape into the next state, but must continue to "animate that dead night/Not once but many times" (Plays, 1049).

The third state between lives is the Shiftings, in which "the soul is brought to a contemplation of good and evil" (A Vision, 232) and subsequently purified of them without suffering, for suffering ends when the Meditation is completed. The Shiftings, as the name implies, operates through a reversal of natures: "In so far as the man did good without knowing evil, or evil without knowing good, his nature is reversed until that knowledge is obtained" (A Vision, 231). Thus in The Only Jealousy of Emer, Cuchulain, who has neglected his wife and "valued every slut above her" (Plays, 557) while he still lived, in death suddenly longs for her.

In the states before the Shiftings, the Celestial Body has appeared only through the medium of "Messengers" (A Vision, 232), presumably the Spirits of the Thirteenth Cone or their representatives. In the Shiftings, however, the Celestial Body is "present in person" (A Vision, 232). In alchemical terms, the first transmutation has been effected: the Shiftings, Yeats tells us, "is described as a true life, as distinguished from the preceding states" (A Vision, 232). The Vision of the Blood Kindred and the Meditation were dream lives, pre-determined re-runs and completions of the earthly life just lived. In the Shiftings, however, the soul, being "free in the sense that it is subject to necessary truth alone" (A Vision, 232), undertakes new experiences and lives a life that is the reverse of its past earthly life.[36] The "limits of the good and evil of the previous life" (A Vision, 232) in the Shiftings is the individual soul's necessary truth.

The freedom of the soul in the Shiftings is reflected in the form the Spirit takes. Up until now, the Spirit has assumed one or the other of the forms it had in life. In The Only Jealousy of Emer, Bricriu of the Sidhe explains that the ghost of Cuchulain, like "all dreaming shades/Before they are accustomed to their freedom,/ . . . has taken his familiar form" (Plays, 549). In the Shiftings, the Spirit may continue to adopt "whatever form was most familiar to others during its life," or it may give expression to its freedom, "renounce the form of a man and take some shape from the social or religious tradition of its past life, symbolical of its condition" (A Vision, 235-36). Yeats cites the example of the spirit who haunts Leap Castle in the form of "a sheep with short legs and decaying human head" (A Vision, 224). The Young Man in The Dreaming of the Bones speaks of souls

> Who, having sinned after a monstrous fashion,
> Take on them, being dead, a monstrous image
> To drive the living, should they meet its face,
> Crazy, and be a terror to the dead. (Plays, 770)

These are probably Spirits in the Shiftings.

The Shiftings corresponds to alchemical distillation, the operation in which the purified elements isolated by the earlier stages of the process--in this case, Spirit and Celestial Body--are collected, brought together but not yet fully united. The union takes place with the next operation: conjunction, the "chymical wedding" of opposites.

In the progress from death to rebirth, the Shiftings is followed by the Marriage or Beatitude which brings "complete equilibrium after the conflict of the Shiftings" (A Vision, 232). This state represents a temporary still point in the soul's journey and is thus an image of the phaseless sphere, the ultimate transcendent reality.

Yeats's choice of Marriage or Beatitude as names for this state is significant. He sees in "the natural union of man and woman . . . a symbol of that eternal instant where the antinomy is resolved" (A Vision, 214; see also 52). Of Spirits in this state he observes, "I do not doubt that they make love in that union which Swedenborg has said is of the whole body and seems from far off an incandescence."[37]

Although "Eternity is passion" (Poems, 560), neither earthly sexual intercourse nor the between-life state of Marriage is the resolution itself. They do, however, approximate it:

> If questioned on
> My utmost pleasure with a man
> By some new-married bride, I take
> That stillness for a theme
> Where his heart my heart did seem
> And both adrift on the miraculous stream
> Where--wrote a learned astrologer--
> The Zodiac is changed into a sphere. (Poems, 535)

In "Solomon and the Witch" Yeats explores the concept of the sexual act as an attempt to achieve the final unity that ushers in eternity. Although the attempt is unsuccessful, Sheba is unwilling to admit defeat. The poem concludes with her plea, "O! Solomon! let us try again" (Poems, 389).

In the between-life state of Marriage, the opposites united are Spirit and Celestial Body. Spirit "clings to Celestial Body until they are one and there is only Spirit; pure mind, containing within itself pure truth, that which depends only upon itself" (A Vision, 188-89). In this state, having been like Baile and Aillinn, "purified by tragedy" and thus "Transfigured to pure substance" (Poems, 555), the Spirit has no form, for the unity of Spirit and Celestial Body, of mind and its object is the Divine Idea (A Vision, 187). In alchemical terms the second transmutation has taken place. "The Spirits before the Marriage are spoken of as the dead" because of the continuing influence of the past life and the residuals of Husk and Passionate Body; from the Marriage on, "they are spirits, using that word as it is used in common speech" (A Vision, 235). The old life, Husk and Passionate Body, are gone. In the Marriage, the soul stands on the summit of pure Spirit.

Yeats warns us that no state between death and birth should be mistaken for paradise: "Neither between death and birth nor between birth and death can the soul find more than momentary happiness; its object is to pass rapidly round its circle and find freedom from that circle" (A Vision, 236). The freedom comes only with the repose and music of the condition of fire, but the soul is allowed encouragement through brief intimations of what can be achieved; the harmony of the Marriage where "good and evil vanish into the whole" (A Vision, 232) provides just that.

In a passage in Per Amica Silentia Lunae coming immediately before the section on the condition of fire, Yeats describes the state of Marriage, using imagery that strongly suggests its correspondence to the ultimate reality. Spirits in the state of Marriage perceive

> harmonies, symbols, and patterns, as though all were being refashioned by an artist, and they are moved by emotions, sweet for no imagined good but in themselves, like those of children dancing in a ring. . . . Hitherto shade has communicated with shade in moments of common memory that recur like the figure of a dance in terror or in joy, but now they run together like to like, and their covens and fleets have rhythm and pattern. This running together and running of all to a centre, and yet without loss of identity, has been prepared for by their exploration of their moral life, of its beneficiaries and its victims, and even of all its untrodden paths.[38]

The Marriage is followed by the Purification, the state in which a new, purified Husk and Passionate Body are "born" in the spiritual world, although they do not yet appear on earth because "they are subordinate to the Celestial Body" (A Vision, 233). The Purification corresponds to alchemical sublimation, "the mystic detachment from the world and the dedication to spiritual striving."[39] In "an oscillation, a reversal of the old life," the Spirit seeks to purify its intention of "complexity" (A Vision, 232, 233)[40] and attain "a spiritual state, of which the surroundings and aptitudes of early life are a correspondence" (Plays, 778). The Spirit seeks a state of child-like or "radical innocence" (Poems, 405):

> clambering at the cradle side,
> He dreams himself his mother's pride,
> All knowledge lost in trance
> Of sweeter ignorance. (Plays, 778; Poems, 343)

Like the Man in "The Man and the Echo," in the earlier states between lives the soul

> till his intellect grows sure
> That all's arranged in one clear view,
> Pursues the thoughts that I pursue,
> Then stands in judgment on his soul. . . . (Poems, 633)

Now at last in the Purification, the Spirit, "all work done, dismisses all/Out of intellect and sight" (Poems, 633). All memory of the past life vanishes and the Spirit "is at last free" (A Vision, 233). Adopting "its own particular aim," it chooses as object "a form of perfection" because it has, in the Marriage, participated in the Divine Ideas (A Vision, 233, 234).

Freed completely from the past and with its own aim, the Spirit "becomes self-shaping, self-moving, plastic to itself" (A Vision, 233); it "becomes 'the shape-changer' of the legends, and can cast, like the mediaeval magician, what illusion it would."[41] The state of Purification, then, is Tír-na-n-Og seen, not as ultimate transcendent reality, but as part of the condition of air, one stage in the transformational process that culminates, first in reincarnation, and then, in the fullness of time, in transcendence.

The Spirit may remain in the Purification for centuries because the conditions must be just right for its rebirth. While awaiting reincarnation, it may be assigned a special role in the discarnate life, "become, if it died amidst some primitive community, the guardian of well or temple or be called by the Thirteenth Cone to the care of the newly dead" (A Vision, 233). In two of his plays, Yeats refers to just such a working Spirit. The guardian of the well in At the Hawk's Well disturbs Cuchulain with "her unmoistened eyes":

> I cannot bear her eyes, they are not of this world,
> Nor moist, nor faltering; they are no girl's eyes.
> (Plays, 407, 409)

They are the eyes of a Spirit, as we learn in The Only Jealousy of Emer, the eyes of a Woman of the Sidhe (Plays, 553).

The final state before rebirth is the Foreknowledge. Although the Spirit aims in the Purification at a form of perfection, it is unattainable while the Spirit remains on the wheel of life and death. In the Foreknowledge, the Spirit must accept a substitution for the perfection desired. The next incarnation is this substitution. Before it is reborn, however, the Spirit is granted a vision paralleling that with which it began its passage from death to birth. Whereas the Vision of the Blood Kindred looked back at the old life, however, the vision of the Foreknowledge, as its name suggests, looks forward to the new.

The alchemical stage corresponding to the Foreknowledge is philosophical coagulation--the final union of opposites that effects the last transmutation and produces the gold. The result of the Foreknowledge is the union of a new Husk and Passionate Body to Spirit, and the rebirth into a new phase of the moon:

> The Pestle of the moon
> That pounds up all anew
> Brings me to birth again. (Poems, 346)

The sexual act may be a failure as a vehicle for conveying the soul to the phaseless sphere of the Thirteenth Cone, but it is indispensable for transporting it from phase to phase.

Yeats does not, however, always regard the return of the soul to mortal life and the phases of the moon as desirable. The problem with such reincarnation is that it leads ultimately to the very degenerative metamorphosis the soul was fleeing in the first place: the inexorable turning of the wheel brings back the decrepitude of old age. In this light, the same sexuality that is viewed as a positive force when the soul longs for reincarnation is cast in a negative role, and Yeats wonders,

> What youthful mother, a shape upon her lap
> Honey of generation had betrayed,
> And that must sleep, shriek, struggle to escape
> As recollection or the drug decide,
> Would think her son, did she but see that shape
> With sixty or more winters on its head,
> A compensation for the pang of his birth,
> Or the uncertainty of his setting forth? (Poems, 444)

Escape from the Wheel

When perpetual return is unacceptable, the only answer is to seek stability and changelessness by escaping from the wheel. Yeats explores two possible refuges for the soul that, "by the moon embittered," succeeds in delivering itself "from the crime of death and birth" (Poems, 498, 478): it may escape either into form, or out of form as we know it now.

If it chooses the first option, as it does in "Sailing to Byzantium," the soul seeks refuge in "the artifice of eternity" and the eternity of artifice (Poems, 408). For the sensual music of "Those dying generations" that inhabit nature's country and "commend all summer long/Whatever is begotten, born, and dies," the aged man would substitute the soul's song that praises "Monuments of unageing intellect" (Poems, 407). To make this substitution, however, he must undergo a transformation and purification that culminates in his metamorphosis from "An aged man . . ./A tattered coat upon a stick" into a work of art,

> such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make
> Of hammered gold and gold enamelling
> To keep a drowsy Emperor awake;
> Or set upon a golden bough to sing. (Poems, 407, 408)

The transformation of life into art is effected by the same process that moves the soul from death, through the states between lives to rebirth in human form. The description of the process leading to reincarnation which Yeats gives in Book III of *A Vision* is an image of artistic creation; Yeats implies as much in *Autobiographies* when he says "A writer must die everyday he lives, be reborn, as it is said in the Burial Service, an incorruptible self."[42]

Because "Sailing to Byzantium" and the even more difficult poem Yeats wrote as an "exposition" of its ideas--"Byzantium"[43]--are founded upon this image of artistic creation, in the following discussion of the creative process I shall draw heavily upon these two poems for illustration.

The creative process begins with the *prima materia* of natural existence, with the profane, "the unpurged images of day" (*Poems*, 497):

> A mound of refuse or the sweepings of a street,
> Old kettles, old bottles, and a broken can,
> Old iron, old bones, old rags, that raving slut
> Who keeps the till. (*Poems*, 630)

I use the term *prima materia* advisedly, for as we have seen, Yeats thought of the creative process as a type of alchemical transformation. Indeed, in the passage which I quoted earlier from the Preface to *Poems 1899-1905* Yeats states baldly,

> I know that I have been busy with the Great Work, no lesser thing than that, although it may be the Athanor has burned too fiercely, or too faintly and fitfully, or that the *prima materia* has been ill-chosen. (*Poems*, 849)

He continues:

> All art is in the last analysis an endeavour to condense as out of the flying vapour of the world an image of

> human perfection, and for its own and not for the art's sake, and that is why the labour of alchemists, who were called artists in their day, is a befitting comparison for all deliberate change of style. (Poems, 849)

The condensation or "distillation" of the image is an important aspect of the creative process, for "the flying vapour of the world," daily life, is not art until it is transformed, purified of dross and chance, and given organization and pattern. The artist takes the first step towards achieving this transformation when, "forced to choose/ Perfection of the life, or of the work" (Poems, 495), he chooses the latter, thus effectively cutting himself off from life, renouncing its joys and sorrows, and submitting to the "death of the profane," represented in "Byzantium" by the "great cathedral gong" (Poems, 497) that, as it marks the passing of time, tolls the death knell. If the poet hopes to effect his transformation into the artifice of eternity, then like the cathedral dome of Byzantium's St. Sophia, symbol of the phaseless sphere of Holy Wisdom's eternity, he must disdain

> All that man is,
> All mere complexities,
> The fury and the mire of human veins. (Poems, 497)

Renunciation of life is not easy, however, and so, before leaving it completely, the poet casts a backward glance at life in the Vision of the Blood Kindred. This is the "Night resonance" of "the unpurged images of day," the "night-walkers' song/After great cathedral gong" of death (Poems, 497). In the Vision of the Blood Kindred the poet consolidates in his mind the details of "the foul rag-and-bone shop of the heart" (Poems, 630). This is what the speaker is doing in the first stanza of "Sailing to Byzantium." His Blood Kindred are all

"Those dying generations": "The young/In one another's arms, birds in the trees" and the inhabitants of "The salmon-falls, the mackerel-crowded seas,/Fish, flesh, or fowl" (Poems, 407).

Leaving behind Husk and Passionate Body, sense and its objects, the external world, the poet turns inward. With the inverse movement characteristic of Heraclitean flux, Spirit and Celestial Body, mind and its objects, internal reality, prevail as Husk and Passionate Body disappear, "For Hades' bobbin bound in mummy-cloth/May unwind the winding path" of external reality (Poems, 497) and free the soul to "clap its hands and sing, and louder sing/For every tatter in its mortal dress" (Poems, 407). Relying on his imagination, in the Meditation the poet rehearses his life experiences, especially the most intense, traces them back to their source, and in his mind, completes the events that remain unfinished. In other words, in his internal "singing school," the poet's soul studies his dreams and imaginative projections, the "Monuments of its own magnificence" (Poems, 407).

The poet is guided through the Meditation by the "singing-masters" (Poems, 408) of his soul, the Teaching Spirits of the Thirteenth Cone, whom we have seen are Yeats's equivalents of the Muses. They are "the superhuman" that Yeats hails as "death-in-life and life-in-death" (Poems, 497) because man and the immortal spirits are contraries existing in states of inverse correspondence, "Dying each other's life, living each other's death" (A Vision, 68).[44] These are the "sages standing in God's holy fire/As in the gold mosaic of a wall," the

> Flames that no faggot feeds, nor steel has lit,
> Nor storm disturbs, flames begotten of flame.
> (Poems, 408, 498)

The spirits of the phaseless condition of fire are, like Aedh, "fire burning by itself" (Poems, 803)--pure imagination and its product. They are the complete eternal unity of Spirit and Celestial Body: the Divine Ideas or archetypes stored in Anima Mundi, the Record of the unconscious.

As a result of the Meditation and the good work of his spirit guide, the archetype or image that floats before him, "man or shade,/ Shade more than man, more image than a shade," the poet, having been purified of emotion by the purgatorial flames, leaves behind "all complexities of fury" (Poems, 497, 498). F.A.C. Wilson notes that the "flames begotten of flame" are dual in nature, representing, in Yeats's words, both "the bright and beautiful fire of inspiration and the holy spirit" and "the dark fire of the fierce impersonal energy, or wrath, of God."[45] Thus, detached from emotion, the poet arrives at what Vendler describes as "that tranquillity which must be achieved before recollected emotion becomes amenable to poetic treatment."[46] In this tranquillity the poet obtains self-knowledge and understanding to express in his art. His plea to the sages of flame is answered:

> Consume my heart away; sick with desire
> And fastened to a dying animal
> It knows not what it is. . . . (Poems, 408)

The knowledge gained from the Meditation is increased in the Shiftings, during which the poet moves from emotion-laden meditation on life as it exists in the external world to impassive contemplation of both good and evil as determined from a combination of real and imagined experience, the imagined being a projection from the reversal of the real. The Shiftings is the state corresponding to alchemical distillation. Through knowledge it purifies the poet's Spirit of good and evil and achieves that condensation, "as out of the flying vapour of the world," of the "image of human perfection" mentioned above: the Celestial Body, the ideal form (A Vision, 191) sought by the poet's Spirit is present. In Autobiographies Yeats writes:

> Does not all art come when a nature, that never ceases to judge itself, exhausts personal emotion in action or desire so completely that something impersonal, something that has nothing to do with action or desire, suddenly starts into its place, something which is as unforeseen, as completely organized, even as unique, as the images that pass before the mind between sleeping and waking?[47]

With the arrival of the Celestial Body, the poet moves into the state of Marriage or Beatitude. The complete and felicitous accord of his Spirit with the Celestial Body that is its object of desire creates a unity that gathers the poet momentarily "Into the artifice of eternity" where he discovers "Monuments of unageing intellect" (Poems, 408, 407). The poet is granted a vision of the divine ideas, the archetypes upon which all images of perfection are modelled. In "Vacillation" Yeats describes an experience of the Marriage or Beatitude:

> My fiftieth year had come and gone,
> I sat, a solitary man,
> In a crowded London shop,
> An open book and empty cup
> On the marble table-top.
>
> While on the shop and street I gazed
> My body of a sudden blazed;
> And twenty minutes more or less
> It seemed, so great my happiness,
> That I was blessèd and could bless. (Poems, 501)

The poet has become one of the "blood-begotten spirits" of "Byzantium,"

> Dying into a dance,
> An agony of trance,
> An agony of flame that cannot singe a sleeve. (Poems, 498)

We saw in the passage from Per Amica Silentia Lunae quoted earlier that Yeats associates dance with the state of Marriage.[48] From the time of "The Wanderings of Oisin" with its "wild and sudden dance" by which the inhabitants of Tír-na-n-Og "mocked at Time and Fate and Chance" (Poems, 20), Yeats has used the dance as an image of the Unity of Being that is found "where/The body is not bruised to pleasure soul" (Poems, 445), the perfect unity of form and substance that is eternity:

> O body swayed to music, O brightening glance,
> How can we know the dancer from the dance? (Poems, 446)[49]

The answer is that in the state of Marriage we cannot "know the dancer from the dance" because form and content, the poet's own Celestial Body and Spirit, are wed in the perfect union that he aims to achieve in his art. For the moment, he himself is the work of art, the dancer and the dance caught in the glorious "agony" of revelation. This is an agony of joy, akin to that phase of Christ's agony in the garden when "there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him."[50]

Yeats presents an image of the joyous agony of revelation in "Lapis Lazuli." "Two Chinamen, behind them a third" (Poems, 566)--an ascetic and his pupil, Yeats tells Dorothy Wellesley,[51] accompanied by a servant who is doubtlessly a musician--climb what is both the mountain of the adept and the mountain of artistic inspiration. Yeats imagines the three seated at a half-way house sweetened by the perfume of plum or cherry-branch:

> There, on the mountain and the sky,
> On all the tragic scene they stare.
> One asks for mournful melodies;
> Accomplished fingers begin to play.
> Their eyes mid many wrinkles, their eyes,
> Their ancient, glittering eyes, are gay. (Poems, 567)

The "tragic scene" is in part the natural one of mountain and sky, but beyond this it is also the supernatural world symbolized by the natural: the domain of spirit and the divine ideas. On the mountain heights, the point of contact between man and the divine, the Chinamen have entered the "agony of trance." To their staring eyes comes revelation, which the musician sustains with his mournful melodies. Despite the tragic scene and the tone of the music, however, the men's eyes are gay because the vision and the art that embodies it bring "Gaiety transfiguring all that dread" (Poems, 565).

The Herne's Egg provides an interesting image of the state of Marriage. While in a trance, Attracta, a priestess with a very appropriate name who, among other things, represents Spirit and, by extension, the poet, enters into Marriage with her god, the Great Herne, who represents the Celestial Body desired by Spirit. Attracta and the Great Herne are parallels to Leda and the Swan and Mary and the Dove. For each relationship Yeats has provided a lyric describing the "agony of flame" that is the union of Spirit and Celestial Body.[52] Terror and horror mark each, but desire, love and, for Attracta at least, joy provide compensation. Attracta describes her union with the Great Herne and one of its consequences:

> I lay in the bride-bed,
> His thunderbolts in my hand. . . .
> I share his knowledge. . . . (Plays, 1032-33)

Attracta's statement is Yeats's answer, an affirmative one, to the closing question of "Leda and the Swan"--

> Did she put on his knowledge with his power
> Before the indifferent beak could let her drop? (Poems, 441)

Although Attracta held the divine thunderbolts in her hand, she "gave them back" (Plays, 1032); she chose at this stage not to exercise the power gained in the union of Spirit and Celestial Body. Attracta's non-action is typical of the state of Marriage, "For meditations upon unknown thought/Make human intercourse grow less and less" (A Vision, 305, Poems, 473). The Marriage is the still point in the creative process: before trying to embody it in art, the poet pauses to savour the perfect union of mind and truth that he discovers within himself. Like the souls in Phase 15, for the moment he is self-absorbed. As a consequence, he is silent like the sage or saint who, "turning the life inward at the tongue as though it heard the cry Secretum meum mihi," chooses "not, as we do, to say all and know nothing, but to know all and to say nothing" (Poems, 849). The poet is engrossed by pure Spirit; since form is essential to expression, he writes nothing at this stage.

The Marriage does not last, however, and the poet, smitten by the perfection of the divine ideas he has experienced, begins his attempt to communicate them to others. The creative process enters the state of Purification during which "a new Husk and Passionate Body take the place of the old; made from the old, yet, as it were, pure" (A Vision, 233). The poet rejects any forced imitation of life or other art works and begins to search for the unique mode of expression proper to his thought. His special mode of expression will be based on tradition, on "past lives," but not limited to them, for the Spirit "is at last free" to choose its own expressive mask from among "a few traditional attitudes" which, if he is a lyric poet, include "lover, sage, hero, scorner of life" (A Vision, 233, 234). Vendler explains that the traditional attitude "is not only a mask through which the poet can project feelings; it is also a tap root sent down to sources of art,"[53] a link with the "spiritual norm" (A Vision, 234) of the divine ideas and a vehicle by which the poet may become aware of his own potential perfection. The role and functioning of the mask will be discussed more fully a little later in this chapter.

Having been through the state of Marriage, the poet's Spirit knows the ideal form, its Celestial Body; he therefore aims for perfection in his work. The poet experiments with form, becomes a shape-shifter. The art work is taking form; "self-shaping, self-moving, plastic to itself" (A Vision, 233), it is moulded from within by its own inner necessity, the Spirit's striving after a form of perfection.

Because perfection is impossible in this life--"We live with images, that is our renunciation" (Poems, 849)--if the poet wishes to communicate the knowledge acquired in the state of Marriage, he must substitute an image or imitation for the form of perfection sought in the state of Purification. Even though this substitution must remain but an imperfect reflection of the Celestial Body, the ideal form wedded to Spirit in the Marriage, it is nonetheless necessary. Attracta describes the problem in The Herne's Egg:

> I lay with the Great Herne, and he,
> Being all a spirit, but begot
> His image in the mirror of my spirit,
> Being all sufficient to himself
> Begot himself; but there's a work
> That should be done, and that work needs
> No bird's beak nor claw, but a man,
> The imperfection of a man. (Plays, 1039-40)

The "work" needs the imperfection of an incarnate form that will produce a new unity with Spirit. The result will be the birth of the work of art, itself an image of the image in the mirror of the poet's spirit and, at the same time, the reincarnation, after transmutation, of the old life, the mire and blood from which the process of transformation began.

The reincarnation cannot occur, however, until the poet knows and accepts the shape his work will have. Knowledge and acceptance come in the state of Foreknowledge when the poet ceases his experimentation and gives the final form to his work. In the last stanza of "Sailing to Byzantium," Yeats speaks of the end product of the long process of transformation:

> Once out of nature I shall never take
> My bodily form from any natural thing,
> But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make
> Of hammered gold and gold enamelling
> To keep a drowsy Emperor awake;
> Or set upon a golden bough to sing
> To lords and ladies of Byzantium
> Of what is past, or passing, or to come. (Poems, 408)

Sturge Moore was at least partly right when he objected to Yeats that "such a goldsmith's bird is as much nature as a man's body, especially if it only sings like Homer and Shakespeare of what is past or passing or to come to Lords and Ladies."[54] But even while it is a part of nature, the best art, at least, transcends nature, for it is a reflection, an image, albeit imperfect, of the divine ideas. Renaissance art, Yeats reminds us, is a case in point:

Quattrocento put in paint
On backgrounds for a God or Saint
Gardens where a soul's at ease;
Where everything that meets the eye,
Flowers and grass and cloudless sky,
Resemble forms that are or seem
When sleepers wake and yet still dream,
And when it's vanished still declare,
With only bed and bedstead there,
That heavens had opened. (Poems, 639)

Such art has certain significant powers:

Miracle, bird or golden handiwork,
More miracle than bird or handiwork,
Planted on the star-lit golden bough,
Can like the cocks of Hades crow,
Or, by the moon embittered, scorn aloud
In glory of changeless metal
Common bird or petal
And all complexities of mire or blood. (Poems, 497-98)

The work of art may lead the soul either back to life, or out of life. The first movement is implied by the reference to the crowing of Hades' cocks. F.A.C. Wilson comments that Hades' cocks stand for the bird of Hermes Psychopompus and are, therefore, symbols of rebirth.[55] Their crowing signifies the dawning of a new life.[56] As an image of perfection, art can

Bring the soul of man to God,
Make him fill the cradles right. (Poems, 638)

This is a heavy responsibility; if it is ignored or not carried out properly the consequences are serious. It is for this reason that in "Under Ben Bulben" Yeats urges

Irish poets, learn your trade,
Sing whatever is well made,
Scorn the sort now growing up
All out of shape from toe to top,
Their unremembering hearts and heads
Base-born products of base beds.

Sing the peasantry, and then
Hard-riding country gentlemen,
The holiness of monks, and after
Porter-drinkers' randy laughter;
Sing the lords and ladies gay
That were beaten into the clay
Through seven heroic centuries;
Cast your mind on other days
That we in coming days may be
Still the indomitable Irishry. (Poems, 639-40)

The Herne's Egg illustrates the consequences of misusing the divine gift of creativity. Because they have abused the product of that creativity--the Herne's eggs (which are, as Vendler points out, "like Leda's egg, a symbol of the product of union of Muse and poet--the completed poem")[57]--Congal, Aedh and the other men of Connacht and Tara are placed under a curse:

"He that a herne's egg dare steal
Shall be changed into a fool,"
Said the old, old herne that had but one leg.

"And to end his fool breath
At a fool's hand meet his death,"
Said the old, old herne that had but one leg. (Plays, 1018)

Later, seven of the men compound their sin by misusing the creative process itself: they violate the link between man and the divine when they rape Attracta, the poetic Spirit. The result is another curse: Attracta tells them that the Great Herne

will come when you are dead,
Push you down a step or two
Into cat or rat or bat,
Into dog or wolf or goose.
Everybody in his new shape I can see,
But Congal there stands in a cloud
Because his fate is not yet settled. (Plays, 1033)

The prophecies come true. To alter one of Yeats's phrases slightly, "Confusion fell upon [their] thought" (Poems, 639). Connacht and Tara return to war but their traditionally ordered and ceremonious "perfect battles" (Plays, 1013) have been transformed into a foolish and drunken parody in which swords and shields are replaced by table-legs and candlesticks. The movements of the men and the sound effects accompanying the battles have also changed to emphasize the transformation. In the first--heroic--battle scene, "The men move rhythmically as if in a dance; when swords approach one another cymbals clash; when swords and shields approach drums boom" (Plays, 1012). In the second battle scene, the men are drunk and, presumably, staggering; the cymbals have been replaced by concertina and the resonant booming of the drums by less impressive drum-taps.

Aedh, turned fool, is killed by "moon-crazed" (Plays, 1037) Congal. Later, Congal is wounded by Tom Fool wielding a cooking spit and then dies at his own hand by the same weapon, wondering, "Am I myself a Fool?" (Plays, 1038). Just before the play ends Congal's fate is settled, his new incarnation determined: his soul is transferred to the body of a donkey conceived just after his death.

Although Attracta, the pure creative Spirit, makes an attempt to save Congal from his fate, despite his sin against the god and herself, she is too late. Congal could have been killed by Tom Fool or one of the other Fools the Great Herne might have sent. Had this happened, he might have been saved, for Tom and the others are sacred fools, messengers of the god, like the fool of Aengus. But Congal chooses to kill himself and so dies, unredeemed, at the hand of the profane fool. In the final two lines of the play, Corney sums up the consequences of misusing creativity:

> All that trouble and nothing to show for it,
> Nothing but just another donkey. (Plays, 1040)

When the creative process is abused, the end product is not the sacred egg, nor even the heroic though imperfect man, but the silly jack-ass.

One final comment should be made on The Herne's Egg before leaving it, and that concerns Attracta's reason for attempting to save Congal. Before her rape, Attracta is in a sense pure Spirit. As her description of what she hopes for from union with the Great Herne indicates, she is on the "straight path" of the arrow taken by saint or sage directly to the condition of fire:[58]

> Strong sinew and soft flesh
> Are foliage round the shaft
> Before the arrowsmith
> Has stripped it, and I pray
> That I, all foliage gone,
> May shoot into my joy. (Plays, 1020)

Since Attracta burns "Not in the flesh but in the mind" (Plays, 1017), she has, in F.A.C. Wilson's words, "no desires but the intellectual desire for union with God; her bridebed is pure spirituality."[59] Such purity is desirable in those who have left the world completely, but not in those who still remain in it, for as we saw earlier, to refuse experience is to starve the Spirits of the Thirteenth Cone for whom "Our actions . . . are the food and drink" (A Vision, 230). To a certain extent, the precept about refusing experience applies to Attracta, for while as priestess and poet she is not of the world, she is still somewhat in it. Thus Attracta's rape, a negative act as it relates to the men, is positive as it relates to her. It serves simultaneously to consummate her marriage with the god by proxy[60] and to involve her with the world, taking her off the straight Path of the Arrow and placing her on the winding Path of the Serpent.[61] After the Beatitude or Marriage, the poet must return to the world and endeavour to redeem it by sharing the bliss he has experienced and by instilling in man desire for the divine ideas. Attracta does her duty by attempting to save Congal from his fate; that she fails is his fault, not hers.

When the soul, "by the moon embittered," does not wish to return to life, under the right circumstances it may, "In glory of changeless metal," escape "all complexities of mire or blood" (Poems, 498) as a work of art. As a consequence, the soul attains peace and a form of immortality, for "The smithies" and the "Marbles of the dancing floor," the artists and their workshops, "break the flood" of life and death, "That dolphin-torn, that gong-tormented sea" (Poems, 498). They halt the cyclic return of reincarnation, represented in "Byzantium" by the images of "Spirit after spirit" astraddle on the psychopompous "dolphin's mire and blood" and by "Those images that yet/Fresh images beget" (Poems, 498).

In the discussion above, I have treated the process of reincarnation as an image of artistic creation which proceeds from form (the rag-and-bone shop of life), through formlessness (the spiritual union of mind and its desired object, the divine archetypes), and back into a new form (the art work). Vendler describes the process in these terms:

> The mind in creation receives the unrefined and determined sense impression, transforms it to an image, reduces it to its essence by deleting irrelevant details, and at last confers on it its final imaginative shape.[62]

Yeats's images and their symbolism, like his system as a whole, are marked by wheels within wheels, by the perpetual conflict of antitheses forever transforming one into the other. The process of rebirth as image of artistic creation, of transformation from one form into another, may in turn be taken as an image of the way to human perfection and transcendence, an image of the creation of the purified soul reborn into a new life, out of form as we know it, in the phaseless sphere of the ultimate reality.

The golden bird and golden branch of the Byzantium poems are important images in this connection for, as F.A.C. Wilson indicates, the branch represents the tree of life and the singing bird that "symbolises the purified soul, which has risen to the summit of existence,"[63] has moved "out of nature" (Poems, 408). The transcendent soul and the phaseless sphere, which are actually synonymous,[64] are the supreme instances of the artifice of eternity, for the soul, like the alchemist who is both magus and opus, is simultaneously divine artist and divine work of art, eternity and its creation:

> Has not Plotinus written: "Let every soul recall, then, at the outset the truth that soul is the author of all living things, that it has breathed the life into them all, whatever is nourished by earth and sea, all the creatures of the air, the divine stars in the sky; it is the maker of the sun; itself formed and ordered this vast heaven and conducts all that rhythmic motion--and it is a principle distinct from all these to which it gives law and movement and life, and it must of necessity be more honourable than they, for they gather or dissolve as soul brings them life or abandons them, but soul, since it never can abandon itself, is of eternal . . . being"? (Poems, 826)

Clearly, the golden bird of Byzantium is the end product of the alchemical process, the precious metal of the transformed soul. That Yeats intended the analogy between alchemy, reincarnation, and transcendence to the ultimate reality is evident from the last two stanzas of "The Hero, the Girl, and the Fool." The Fool by the Roadside speaks of the time when he shall escape from the wheel of reincarnation:

> When all works that have
> From cradle run to grave
> From grave to cradle run instead;
> When thoughts that a fool
> Has wound upon a spool
> Are but loose thread, are but loose thread;
>
> When cradle and spool are past
> And I mere shade at last
> Coagulate of stuff
> Transparent like the wind. (Poems, 449)

The term "coagulate," of course, comes from alchemy, from the dictum *Solve et coagula* and from philosophical coagulation, the final stage of the process that results in the transmutation of the base metal into gold.

Unity of Being: The Condition of Fire

When the purified soul is reborn into the phaseless sphere, it achieves its primary object, which is "to pass rapidly round its circle [of reincarnations] and find freedom from that circle" (*A Vision*, 236), thus escaping once and for all from the degenerative metamorphosis of earthly life. How this transformation is accomplished will be the focus of this section of my dissertation.

The Soul will exist in the phaseless sphere or condition of fire when time and space cease and the soul "puts on the rhythmic or spiritual body or luminous body [Celestial Body] and contemplates all the events of its memory and every possible impulse in an eternal possession of itself in one single moment."[65] The result is what Yeats terms Unity of Being, a harmony of the opposites that constitute the Self[66] and that produce divine (redeemed) man. Christ is an example of "that Unity of Being Dante compared to a perfectly proportioned human body, Blake's 'imagination,' what the Upanishads have named 'Self'."[67] He is both divine spirit and "perfect physical man" (A Vision, 273).[68] This latter quality is exceedingly important because Yeats insists that the struggle between opposites in conflict culminates in "a reality which is concrete, sensuous, bodily" (A Vision, 214). This is not the reality of terrestrial existence but it does correspond to it, "For things below are copies, the Great Smaragdine Tablet said" (Poems, 556). Thus the body participates with the soul in the ultimate harmony of opposites, but it is the transformed, transfigured body that has paddled

> In that mysterious, always brimming lake
> Where those that have obeyed the holy law
> Paddle and are perfect. (Poems, 356-57)

Yeats's play, The Resurrection, is concerned in part with the Unity of Being symbolized by Christ. The Greek and the Hebrew represent opposing and wrong-headed views on his nature. Although they have both been followers of Jesus, neither is a true Christian for each denies one essential factor in Christ's make-up. The Greek recognizes Christ as a god, but denies his humanity, believing that as pure spirit "Jesus never had a human body; that he is a phantom and can pass through that wall" (Plays, 923). Christ did not, therefore, really die, the Greek believes, because

> No god has ever been buried; no god has ever suffered.
> Christ only seemed to be born, only seemed to eat,
> seemed to sleep, seemed to walk, seemed to die. (Plays, 909)

The Hebrew makes the same assumption as the Greek about the pure spirituality of divinity, but takes the opposite stand on the death and nature of Jesus. He accepts his humanity and his death as realities, but concludes that precisely because he did die Jesus could not have been the Messiah:

> He was nothing more than a man, the best man who ever lived. Nobody before him had so pitied human misery. He preached the coming of the Messiah because he thought the Messiah would take it all upon himself. Then some day when he was very tired, after a long journey perhaps, he thought that he himself was the Messiah. (Plays, 909)

The Greek believes Christ has deliberately deluded mankind, and the Hebrew that he has unwittingly deluded both mankind and himself.

The Hebrew had been close to the truth about Christ's real nature as we can see from his explanation that "If the Messiah were not born of a woman he could not take away the sins of man" (Plays, 911). He does not, however, have the faith to sustain a belief in the dual nature of Jesus. One character in the play does: the Syrian. He accepts Jesus as both man and god, body and spirit, and believes in his death and resurrection as realities.[69] It is the Syrian's perspective that Yeats supports in The Resurrection, for it bears witness to the Unity of Being that characterizes those in the condition of fire. When the silent figure of Christ appears on stage at the end of the play, we find that the Greek and the Hebrew are both partly right. Christ is Spirit, a phantom that can pass through walls; but he is also real flesh and blood, his body is a reality, not an illusion: as the Greek discovers to his horror when he approaches Christ, the heart of the phantom is beating.

Although he does not state so directly, Yeats implies that every Self was once just such a harmony, the Unity of Being that Christ represents: an Uroboros with its tail in its mouth, a union of "yolk and white of the one shell" (Poems, 443)[70] as in the Platonic myth. The self was all:

> Death and life were not
> Till man made up the whole,
> Made lock, stock and barrel
> Out of his bitter soul,
> Aye, sun and moon and star, all. (Poems, 415)

For some reason, the serpent released its tail, the egg shell broke. Harmony was lost and the Self became fragmented into contrary pieces. Now it is the task of the scattered parts to seek their opposites and return to the original unity, to join "their beginning and their end" (A Vision, 69) and halt the cycle of death and reincarnation.

The two major fragments into which the Self disintegrated are mortal man (the self as we usually think of it) and the "timeless individuality" (Plays, 970) of "the Daimon or ultimate self of that man" (A Vision, 83).[71] In the Introduction to The Words Upon the Window-Pane, Yeats explains that the Daimon "contains archetypes of all possible existences whether of man or brute, and as it traverses its circle of allotted lives, now one, now another, prevails" (Plays, 970). It is thus in large measure upon the Daimon that the character of each of these allotted lives ultimately depends. Indeed, the Four Faculties which, together with the Four Principles, govern the soul's existence, are "the result of the four memories of the Daimon" (A Vision, 83).

Like the Principles, the Faculties are divided into two opposing sets. One of each pair is an active Faculty, the other passive. Will, the voluntary self or normal ego, the "Is," is shaped out of the Daimon's "memory of all the events of [the individual's] present life, whether consciously remembered or not"; its opposite, *Mask*, Will's "object of desire or idea of the good," the "Ought," is shaped out of the Daimon's "memory of the moments of exaltation in his past lives"; *Creative Mind*, thought, "the Knower," is shaped from the Daimon's "memory of ideas--or universals--displayed by actual men in past lives, or their spirits between lives"; and Creative Mind's opposite, *Body of Fate*, the object of thought, "the Known," "Fact," or "the series of events forced upon [man] from without," is shaped out of the Daimon's "memory of the events of his past incarnations" (*A Vision*, 73, 83, 192). Thus "All things are present as an eternal instant to our *Daimon*" which "contains within it, co-existing in its eternal moment, all the events of our life, all that we have known of other lives, or that it can discover within itself of other *Daimons*" (*A Vision*, 193, 192).

Although on one level he is complete in himself, an image of perfection, of Unity of Being, because he has chosen to re-involve himself with the world, Villiers's Janus, with his preternatural knowledge and power, and his influence on the destinies of Axël and Sara, strongly resembles Yeats's concept of the Daimon. Janus is not, in this case, the Daimon of an individual, but of the Auërsberg and De Maupers families, the "deux races," Janus tells us, "élues par moi, du fond des âges" (*Axël*, 190).

There is an interesting passage in *Autobiographies* relevant to the role of Janus as Daimon. Here Yeats describes the "personifying spirits that we had best call but Gates and Gate-keepers, because through their dramatic power they bring our souls to crisis, to Mask and Image."[72] This is precisely the role of Janus in relation to Axël and Sara. As we have already seen, Janus's name is appropriate to his function. Although Yeats does not use the term Daimon in the passage on the Gates and Gate-keepers, it is clear from the context and from one particular passage in A Vision that it is the Daimon to which he is referring. In the passage of A Vision, Yeats draws an analogy with the Commedia dell'Arte to describe the interaction of the Daimon and the Faculties in the individual life. In the case of antithetical man:

> The stage-manager, or Daimon, offers his actor an inherited scenario, the Body of Fate, and a Mask or rôle as unlike as possible to his natural ego or Will, and leaves him to improvise through his Creative Mind the dialogue and details of the plot. (A Vision, 84)

When the individual is a primary man, the creative talents of improvisation, of self-expression, are missing:

> The Will is weak and cannot create a rôle, and so, if it transform itself, does so after an accepted pattern, some traditional clown or pantaloon. . . . Instead of the created Mask he has an imitative Mask. (A Vision, 84)[73]

Because it is the double of "the particular" that "is pounded till it is man" (Poems, 382) and "of all imaginable things/The most unlike" (Poems, 371) that man, being his mirror opposite, the Daimon is also known as the anti-self or antithetical self. It is "in some sense" of the individual's being, "but as water with fire, a noise with silence."[74] Attracted to its opposite, "to whatever man or, if its nature is more general, to whatever nation it most differs from," the Daimon "shapes into its own image the antithetical dream of man or nation."[75] That image is "a myth, a woman, a landscape, or anything whatsoever that is an external expression of the Mask" (A Vision, 107). As we have seen, it is usual for beings from beyond life to seek communication with the living through the vehicle of a mask.[76] It is to the Daimons and their Images that Yeats refers in Per Amica Silentia Lunae when he writes, "I had always to compel myself to fix the imagination upon the minds behind the personifications, and yet the personifications were themselves living and vivid."[77] The Daimons he assigns to the condition of fire, and their Images to the condition of air.[78]

The Daimon is man's destiny.[79] Life, Yeats tells us, is "a struggle with the Daimon who would ever set us to the hardest work among those not impossible."[80] There is a close connection between man's Daimon and his sweetheart; Yeats wonders "if there may not be some secret communion, some whispering in the dark between Daimon and sweetheart."[81] Although in his prose Yeats refers to the Daimon as masculine or neuter, in alchemical terms it may be seen as the sexual opposite--the female or, as the case may be, male principle with whom the individual is destined for union, first in the stage of conjunction (the analogue of the state of Marriage) and then in philosophic coagulation, that final chymical wedding that transmutes the separate elements into a transcendent unity.

In Axël and L'Eve future, Axël and Ewald may be regarded as self and Sara and Hadaly as anti-self or Daimon. As an occult being, who embodies the archetypes of all women and who is incarnate in the image of that beauty desired by Ewald, Hadaly is perhaps a purer representative of the Daimon and its Image than is mortal Sara, but the relationship between both sets of lovers is, nonetheless, that between self and anti-self.

Axël and Sara presumably achieve Unity of Being at their death ("the ringers in the tower have appointed for the hymen of the soul a passing bell").[82] Transcending terrestrial existence, they are reborn into the harmony and repose of the condition of fire, symbolized by the music in the background and the dawning of Easter morning at the close of the play. The "passing bell" that rings their wedding chimes is the gold coin that "tombe, roule et sonne comme l'heure contre un sépulcre" (Axël, 271).

Ewald and Hadaly fall short of the complete union, but progress a considerable way towards it. Although they are not yet united and reborn together into the phaseless sphere, they have been through the state of Marriage: in the epiphanic garden scene, Ewald is granted his moment of revelation. When he retires to the isolation of his Scottish domain, he is entering the state of Purification or alchemical sublimation and we can surmise that the result of this detachment from the world will be Foreknowledge or philosophic coagulation and, consequently, transformation, through reunion with Hadaly, into true Unity of Being.

Yeats's poems, "Solomon and the Witch" and "The Hero, the Girl, and the Fool," are concerned with Unity of Being and with the relationship between man, Daimon, and sweetheart. Both the Girl and the Hero are upset because they love each other, not for their true selves, but for the image each has created of the other. This image (of beauty in the case of the Girl, and of strength in the case of the Hero) is simultaneously of, and yet not of, the individual. Yeats uses the figure of the Girl's reflection in the mirror to suggest this paradox. As the Girl herself explains, "my own image in the glass" is

> so unlike myself that when you praise it
> It is as though you praised another, or even
> Mocked me with praise of my mere opposite. (Poems, 447-48)

The play upon words in the last line is significant. The image would seem to be the image of the opposite desired, the Image of the Daimon. The dialogue between the Girl and the Hero, like that between Solomon and the Witch establishes that the attraction to the sweetheart is an illusion--Yeats suggests that it is to the Image of the Daimon that we are actually attracted. The Girl concludes "That only God has loved us for ourselves" (Poems, 448).[83]

Yeats tells us in a footnote to Autobiographies that "There is a form of Mask or Image that comes from life and is fated, but there is a form that is chosen."[84] The image of "The Hero, the Girl, and the Fool" is the Image that is chosen. In "Solomon and the Witch" Yeats refers to the Image that is fated; when explaining that the result of the confusion between image (or illusion) and reality would in this life seem to be disappointment, Solomon suggests that

> Maybe the bride-bed brings despair,
> For each an imagined image brings
> And finds a real image there. (Poems, 388)

The "imagined image" is the chosen Mask, that freely desired by the individual; the "real image" is forced upon man by chance, by the Body of Fate. When, "Chance being at one with Choice at last" (Poems, 388), real and imagined image, Daimon and sweetheart, happen to coincide, then

> the world ends when these two things,
> Though several, are a single light,
> When oil and wick are burned in one. (Poems, 388)

Then and only then, "When cradle and spool are past," may man "find/ A faithful love, a faithful love" (Poems, 449) and, joined with her in Unity of Being, participate in the phaseless sphere:

> There all the barrel-hoops are knit,
> There all the serpent-tails are bit,
> There all the gyres converge in one,
> There all the planets drop in the Sun. (Poems, 557)

Earlier in this chapter I noted that Phase 15, although part of the cycle of reincarnation, is the phase that most resembles the condition of fire. Like the state of Marriage between lives, and Tír-na-n-Og in its guise as a transitional stage in the process of transcendence, Phase 15 is an image of the ideal, of the phaseless sphere or ultimate reality. Standing in the focal position at the mid-point in the wheel of phases, Fifteen is the apex of the wheel. The fourteen phases preceding it build up to its subjective achievement, and the fourteen that follow represent a descent or falling away into objectivity.

All three images of the phaseless sphere are temporary states or conditions that give man a foretaste of the glory to come through a kind of Unity of Being. In the condition of fire, man and Daimon, self and anti-self, will be united. In Phase 15, although they are still separate,[85] a number of other unions imitate their eventual marriage and, as it were, perform a betrothal ceremony between self and anti-self with the Daimon's Image standing in as its proxy. The Principles of Spirit and Celestial Body are one: "the soul/Becomes a body" (Poems, 374). The Faculties of Creative Mind and Will, Mask and Body of Fate are one: "Thought and will [or contemplation and desire] are indistinguishable, effort [desire, Mask, Choice] and attainment [Body of Fate, Chance] are indistinguishable" (A Vision, 135, 136). What the being in Phase 15 contemplates it desires, and vice versa; what it desires, it attains, and vice versa. Like Axël and Sara and all who have achieved Unity of Being, those in Phase 15 are "at the same instant predestinate and free, creation's very self."[86] Consequently, "nothing is apparent but dreaming Will and the Image that it dreams" (A Vision, 135), the Image of the Daimon which is also the image desired. Because the Daimon is present through its proxy, the Will is satisfied, desire and effort cease and "All thought becomes an image" (Poems, 374)[87]--abstraction, ideas, universals, are transformed into the concrete, the particular.[88]

When desire is overcome, what is thought by the being in Phase 15 is what *is* for him. This is the lesson Janus tries to teach Axël when he urges detachment on him.[89] "Tu n'es que ce que tu penses: pense-toi donc éternel," he tells Axël; the result will be escape "dans l'Increé" (Axël, 193). It is significant that Axël and Sara effect their escape into Unity of Being at Easter which, as Yeats points out in A Vision, is associated with the full moon in March and the vernal equinox, the time of new life, "of victims and of saviours" to which Yeats assigns Phase 15 as well as "the first day of our symbolical or ideal year," and the moment of transformation to the phaseless sphere (A Vision, 245, 196).

Yeats depicts the Unity of Being achieved in Phase 15 in his poem "The Double Vision of Michael Robartes." Here, appropriately, it is a dancer who has found "the rhythmic body" that soul must put on in order "to pass into the Condition of Fire, [and be] born again."[90]

The speaker, Michael Robartes, speculates that the girl probably

> had danced her life away,
> For now being dead it seemed
> That she of dancing dreamed. (Poems, 383)

Dancing had been her desire in life. Now she has attained that desire and, self-absorbed, she has no thought but the dance and the perfect body that expresses it: the Unity of Being that combines abstract universals and concrete particulars.[91]

The girl dances between two entranced figures: a Sphinx and a Buddha, who "stand, so to speak, like heraldic supporters guarding the mystery of the fifteenth phase" (A Vision, 207). The Sphinx is the porter who guards the entry from the antithetical phases preceding Fifteen. She represents "introspective knowledge of the mind's self-begotten unity, an intellectual excitement" (A Vision, 207):

> her eyes lit by the moon
> Gazed upon all things known, all things unknown,
> In triumph of intellect
> With motionless head erect. (Poems, 383)

The "moonlit eyeballs" of the Buddha, on the other hand,

> never moved,
> Being fixed on all things loved, all things unloved,
> Yet little peace he had,
> For those that love are sad. (Poems, 383)

Yeats explains in A Vision that he made an error in thus assigning the Buddha as an image of "the outward-looking mind, love and its lure": Christ should have replaced him as the porter to the phases which follow Fifteen and lead to the primary tincture (A Vision, 207, 208).

Divorced from the external world, Sphinx, Buddha, and, above all, the dancer, each in their own way participate in the eternity of the phaseless sphere through Unity of Being:

> O little did they care who danced between,
> And little she by whom her dance was seen
> So she had outdanced thought.
> Body perfection brought,
>
> For what but eye and ear silence the mind
> With the minute particulars of mankind?
> Mind moved yet seemed to stop
> As 'twere a spinning-top.
>
> In contemplation had those three so wrought
> Upon a moment, and so stretched it out
> That they, time overthrown,
> Were dead yet flesh and bone. (Poems, 383-84)

If transcendence to the phaseless sphere comes through Unity of Being, then those who would exist in the condition of fire must enter "upon the eternal possession of themselves in one single moment"[92] by seeking out their opposite, their Daimon. They seek their Daimon through the medium of the Image, the external expression of their desire or Mask and a projection of the Daimon. The Image is a "magical shape,"[93] a symbol that evokes the Daimon as the rose-patterned dance in "Rosa Alchemica" summons the immortals. Thus in "Ego Dominus Tuus" Ille tells Hic that

> By the help of an image
> I call to my own opposite . . .
> . . . to the mysterious one who yet
> Shall walk the wet sands by the edge of the stream
> And look most like me, being indeed my double,
> And prove of all imaginable things
> The most unlike, being my anti-self. (Poems, 367, 371)

The call to the Daimon is made as Ille walks "in the moon" (Poems, 367) because, as we have seen, man "attains his object so far as it is attainable, at Phase 15" (A Vision, 81). If the Daimon appears when summoned, it will, Ille says, "disclose/All that I seek" because it brings with it occult knowledge from Anima Mundi that will lead the individual, through understanding of the "Magical shapes" or images, "these characters" traced upon the wet sands of time, to self knowledge and thus to the transformation of Unity of Being (Poems, 371, 367).[94]

Implicit in Yeats's use of the term "Image" in association with Mask and Daimon is an intimate link between art and Unity of Being. Although human "art/Is but a vision of reality" (Poems, 369) and not reality itself, it is nonetheless important because it is an image of the divine art, an earthly correspondence to the music, the harmonious unity, of the phaseless sphere. The poet's function is two-fold. Like the Stroller in The King of the Great Clock Tower, he is "a sacred man" (Plays, 997) to whom is granted the privilege of receiving and then communicating that vision of reality to the rest of humanity so that we will all aspire to achieve Unity of Being. The poet is also a magician whose works serve as grimoires filled with the "magical shapes" of the images that summon the Daimons to union with their opposites. Like Hadaly, the work of art is both an image of perfection and a means of achieving that perfection.

Two of Yeats's plays are particularly important in connection with the relationship between art and Unity of Being: The King of the Great Clock Tower and A Full Moon in March. Both are reworkings of certain elements found in the early story from The Secret Rose, "The Binding of the Hair."

In The King of the Great Clock Tower there are three characters, the King, the Queen, and the Stroller, supported by a chorus of two Attendants. The Queen, who wears "a beautiful impassive mask" and is "called/Most beautiful of her sex," represents the Daimon's Image (Plays, 991, 995). She sits, in the King's words,

> Dumb as an image made of wood or metal,
> A screen between the living and the dead. (Plays, 993)

That screen, like mask and veil, both hides and suggests the world beyond. It has a visual correspondent in the inner curtain on the stage "whereon is perhaps a stencilled pattern of dancers" (Plays, 991) symbolizing Unity of Being, Phase 15, Tír-na-n-Og.

For the King and his people, the Queen is a mask, a screen that conceals rather than reveals. Both she and her background are a mystery to them, even though they recognize something of special value in her:

> Though neither I
> Nor any man could tell your family,
> Country or name, I put you on that throne. (Plays, 993)

The King of the Great Clock Tower is the ordinary man of this world, Yeats's Paudeen as sovereign of the "terrestrial condition" where the passing of time brings death.

There are those in this life, however, for whom the Queen is a mask that reveals. These are the select few, like the poets, represented in the play by the Stroller who replaces Aodh from "The Binding of the Hair." For the Stroller, the Queen's silence and impassiveness, rather than being "unendurable" (Plays, 993), as they are for the King, are marks that she belongs to Phase 15 and that troop of dancers who, the opening chorus tells us, "dance all day . . . in Tir-nan-oge" where

> every lover is a happy rogue;
> And should he speak, it is the speech of birds.
> No thought has he, and therefore has no words,

> No thought because no clock, no clock because
> If I consider deeply, lad and lass,
> Nerve touching nerve upon that happy ground,
> Are bobbins where all time is bound and wound. (Plays, 991)

As mistress of the Great Clock Tower, the Queen is in time in a very different manner from her King, for she represents the pure time and subjectivity of Phase 15.

The Stroller's special relationship with the Queen is suggested even before he speaks: like her, he wears a mask. The Stroller is not yet of Phase 15 and thus removed from terrestrial life, for his mask covers only the upper part of his face. He is, however, very close to achieving the Unity of Being of that phase: the red beard that hides the lower part of his face suggests that the Stroller has been claimed by the beings of Tír-na-n-Og and will soon join them. He confirms our suspicions when he tells us that he is called a fool and that he has conversed with Aengus and the Gods (Plays, 995, 997).

With his "wild half-savage mask" (Plays, 991) and his role as Aengus's fool, the Stroller represents the poet of Phase 14, "The Obsessed Man" who, Yeats tells us, chooses his Mask from the Fool's Phase (A Vision, 131). The Stroller is obsessed by the image he has created of the Queen. Although he had never seen her before arriving at the Great Clock Tower, he had heard of her great beauty and so, he tells us, "I put her in my songs,/And day by day she grew more beautiful" (Plays, 995). As the Stroller transforms the Queen's real beauty into an even greater imaginary one, like Axël and Sara, who may also be seen as individuals of Phase 14, he becomes less and less interested in the world, which seems to grow in ugliness as the image grows in beauty:

> I had a wife. The image in my head
> Made her appear fat, slow, thick of the limbs,
> In all her movements like a Michaelmas goose. (Plays, 995)

Now "responsibility is renounced" (A Vision, 132). Having left the world behind with his wife, the Stroller has come in search of the "real image" that has given impulse to his "imagined image." As we might expect from reading "Solomon and the Witch," what he finds disappoints the Stroller somewhat, but like Sheba he is undaunted:

> Neither so red, nor white, nor full in the breast
> As I had thought. What matter for all that
> So long as I proclaim her everywhere
> Most beautiful! (Plays, 997)

The Stroller informs the King that not only shall the Queen dance for him (the Stroller) and for him alone, but also kiss him on the mouth "On stroke of midnight when the old year dies" (Plays, 997). The King is understandably upset. He orders the Stroller's head struck off and is incredulous when the latter informs him that, nonetheless, "First the Queen/Will dance before me, second I shall sing" (Plays, 999). Because "Thought is disappearing into image" (A Vision, 134) for the Stroller, in his insolence he seems to the King to have lost his wits, to have become "a rambling rogue" (Plays, 999) in mind as well as body. But the Stroller's foolishness is a mask; behind it lies the truth revealed to him by Aengus and the gods who appeared to the Stroller while he lay in a trance. They served as Teaching Spirits (Plays, 997) to guide his Meditation and prepare him for the Marriage with his Daimon, the mind behind the personification that is the Queen.[95]

The Queen breaks her silence only once in the play. While the Stroller is being beheaded, in "An agony of trance" she sings of her coming union with the Stroller. If the Stroller, as a poet of Phase 14, is "subject to violence [which] . . . seems accidental, unforeseen and cruel" (A Vision, 134), so too is the Image of his Daimon. The Queen's song is an inversion of the lyrics devoted to the Marriage of Attracta, Leda, and Mary, for the Queen's terror is not of supernatural knowledge and union with the divine, but of "Being betrayed into a cradle" (Poems, 284) through union with the human--made incarnate as either mortal being or work of art:

> He longs to kill
> My body, until
> That sudden shudder
> And limbs lie still.
>
> O, what may come
> Into my womb,
> What caterpillar
> My beauty consume? (Plays, 1001)

It is already too late for the Daimon and its Image, however, for with her song the Queen has put aside her silence and impassiveness and reached out to the human. When the Stroller's head is brought in, she begins to dance. After her dance, the Queen picks up the head and, in gratitude, it sings, just as the Stroller had prophesied. The Queen begins to dance again, this time while holding the head. The Clock strikes midnight; on the final stroke play and dance both reach their climax as the Queen, fulfilling the last part of the Stroller's prophecy, "presses her lips to the lips of the head" (Plays, 1003). The union of poet and Daimon is complete.

The sequence of actions in this final scene is important. The Queen's song marks the decision of the Daimon to assist the poet directly in his transformation out of life into art and then into the phaseless sphere. Her first dance is a vision of the beauty and Unity of Being that is possible to those who transcend to Phase 15 and thence to the ultimate reality. Even the King is granted this vision and recognizes its beauty. He urges the Queen, "Display your beauty, spread your peacock tail" (Plays, 1001). But the significance of the revelation is lost on the King, who misinterprets the dance, believing the Queen mocks the Stroller, when in reality she mocks the King.

The Queen's dance is more than revelation for the Stroller; it is also an invitation for him to join her. He responds to the invitation with the song in which he announces his separation from the living and allies himself with Image and Daimon, with the beings of Phase 15 and the condition of fire: "the dead that have/Sprung heroic from the grave" (Plays, 1003). The song depicts terrestrial life as a weak imitation of the life after transformation:

> Clip and lip and long for more,
> Mortal men our abstracts are. (Plays, 1001)

Earthly life is marked by unfulfilled desire for the satisfactions which are "Prerogatives of the dead" who have transcended to the hierosgamos, to Unity of Being:

> Crossed fingers there in pleasure can
> Exceed the nuptial bed of man. (Plays, 1003)

As grimoire filled with the magical shapes that evoke the Daimon, the Stroller's song is a success. In response, the Queen dances again. This second dance, performed with the head as the Clock begins to strike midnight, marks the beginning of the unity of poet and Daimon. The Stroller and the Daimon, represented by its proxy, the Queen, are betrothed. Their dance is both an image of the Stroller's transformation to Phase 15 and an emblem of the perfect unity of artistic form and content.

Yeats was not, of course, alone in using the dance to symbolize artistic union. The symbolists were particularly attracted to the figure of the dance as an image of art. They saw the dance, in Mallarmé's words, as the "incorporation visuelle de l'idée."[96] If, as Pater insists, all the arts aspire to the condition of music in "its consummate moments" when "the end is not distinct from the means, the form from the matter, the subject from the expression; they inhere in and completely saturate each other,"[97] then the dance is even more the perfect art form for, as in music, end, means, form, matter, subject, expression are all one, but in addition, the dance is embodied, the abstract made concrete, for there is no dance without a dancer. Mallarmé describes the dancer's relation to poetry:

> A savoir que la danseuse n'est pas une femme qui danse, pour ces motifs juxtaposés qu'elle n'est pas une femme, mais une métaphore résumant un des aspects élémentaires de notre forme, glaive, coupe, fleur, etc., et qu'elle ne danse pas, suggérant, par le prodige de raccourcis ou d'élans, avec une écriture corporelle ce qu'il faudrait des paragraphes en prose dialoguée autant que descriptive, pour exprimer, dans la rédaction: poëme dégagé de tout appareil du scribe.[98]

As the material realization of the ideal, the dancer comes as close as possible to pure art, for she gives concrete expression to the silence of the Daimon that poetry attempts to translate through the inadequate medium of language.

Yeats himself acknowledges in his Commentary on The King of the Great Clock Tower (Plays, 1010) that his dancer in this play, as in A Full Moon in March, suggests the Salome figure which has long captured the imagination of the Western world.[99] The fascination with Salome and her dance has been expressed in folklore and in a wide variety of art down through the ages. During the latter half of the nineteenth century there was a particular vogue for this motif when, "jaded by exaltations of nature and humanism," artists and writers alike welcomed "with something like relief a Biblical image of the *un*natural."[100] Among the nineteenth-century authors to treat the Salome motif, aside from Yeats, are Heine ("Atta Troll"), Flaubert ("Hérodias"), Laforgue ("Salomé"), Mallarmé ("Hérodiade"), Huysmans (*A Rebours*), Wilde (*Salomé*) and Symons ("Salome" and various other poems). I mention these writers in particular because, diverse as they may at first glance seem, they are all linked by a desire for artistic reform and by a more or less intimate relationship to symbolism (Heine and Flaubert being important precursors to certain aspects of the movement).[101]

It is interesting that, whereas in the works of Flaubert, Wilde, and Symons, the Salome figures dance before the death of John the Baptist, both Yeats and Mallarmé reserve the dance until *after* the death of their prophet-poet. Flaubert, Wilde, and Symons present art (represented by the dance) perverted to an end and, therefore, decadent and immoral; but Mallarmé and Yeats, by the positioning of the dance, not only portray art as *a*moral, but also suggest that ideal Beauty and perfect art are beyond human experience in this life, that pure poetry is impossible. By keeping the dance until after the death of the Stroller, Yeats implies that the Queen was originally form without content in need of union with the latter (the severed head) in order to produce art, the human expression of ideal beauty. Daimon and man need their opposites to achieve Unity of Being.

If the Queen's dance with the severed head represents the temporary unity of Phase 15, then the kiss on the last stroke of midnight symbolizes the complete and eternal unity that transforms man and Daimon out of time and space to the condition of fire. The transformation is marked by the laying of the Stroller's head on the Queen's breast and the fixing of her eyes upon the King: she has entered the final trance and is beyond his power. The King realizes the meaning of the gesture and, kneeling, places his sword at her feet. This gesture is important, for it suggests that he has at last understood the vision he has been granted. Earlier the significance of the revelation embodied in the first dance had been lost on him because, unlike the Stroller, the King is not of those who may receive revelation directly from the Daimon.

In the imagery of Per Amica Silentia Lunae, the Stroller is both privileged and damned to stand in the "zigzag" path of the "sudden lightning" where inspiration, the "descending power" of the Daimon's revelation, comes to him directly.[102] The King, on the other hand, belongs to "the winding path called the Path of the Serpent" where ordinary men must receive their revelation indirectly from the reflection, as it were in water, of the images of the "mirrored life" of the discarnate who exist in "the condition of air" where, in turn "images have but a borrowed life, that of memory or that reflected upon them when they symbolise colours and intensities of fire."[103]

It is art that reflects, as in water, the "seemingly fluid images" in the condition of air, which are in turn the Images or reflections of the Daimons, the "certain aims and governing loves, the fire that makes all simple."[104] The King's revelation comes, then, from the song of the severed head, which is both a reflection of the Unity of Being represented by the second dance, and a means of achieving it. The accomplishment of the poet/Stroller is thus three-fold: by means of his art he seeks and obtains union with the Image/Queen and through this union achieves the ultimate Unity of Being with the Daimon itself, while at the same time, by the vehicle of his art, he enlightens Paudeen/King.

The "Alternative Song for the Severed Head" (Plays, 1005, 1007; Poems, 549-50) included with the 1935 version of The King of the Great Clock Tower suggests the close relationship between art and its images and the transformation to the condition of fire. In this poem a number of characters from Yeats's early works (Cuchulain, Niam, Deirdre and Naiose, Aleel and the Countess Cathleen, Red Hanrahan and the King from "The Wisdom of the King" who had "feathers instead of hair") come "Out of Ben Bulben and Knocknarea," the mountains which represent the síd-mounds, home of the beings in the crucible of Tír-na-n-Og. These characters are the images from Anima Mundi, the Images of Yeats's Daimon. Turning "from Rosses' crawling tide," from the generative "foam" that would betray them into a cradle, they ride instead to meet "upon the mountain side" where, the poem implies, with the striking of "A slow low note and an iron bell" they will achieve that release sought in vain by Diarmuid and Dervorgilla and become part of the timeless.

Yeats felt that there was "a character too many" in The King of the Great Clock Tower and that "reduced to the essentials, to Queen and Stroller, the fable should have greater intensity" (Poems, 857). Thus he "started afresh and called the new version A Full Moon in March" (Poems, 857). With this fresh start, the emphasis of the play changed somewhat. The focus is still on achieving Unity of Being, but the contrast between the opposites that are ultimately wed is much stronger in A Full Moon in March than it is in The King of the Great Clock Tower. Yeats draws our attention to this heightened contrast at the beginning of the play in the lyric accompanying the opening of the inner curtain: as one of the refrains stresses, the battle of contraries is between "Crown of gold or dung of swine" (Plays, 979).

The crown of gold is the Queen, who is no longer a silent and passive reflection of the Daimon, but the Daimon itself, and an active participant in the drama from the start. The mask of The King of the Great Clock Tower has been replaced by a veil suggesting not only the occult nature of the Daimon, but also its impersonal--because archetypal--character.[105] The Queen, "whose emblem is the moon," is a being of pure subjectivity, of Phase 15 wherein "all time's completed treasure is" (Plays, 989), the phase "Of beauty's cruelty" (Poems, 377):

> I am crueller than solitude
> Forest or beast. Some I have killed or maimed
> Because their singing put me in a rage,
> And some because they came at all. Men hold
> That woman's beauty is a kindly thing,
> But they that call me cruel speak the truth,
> Cruel as the winter of virginity. (Plays, 982)

The Queen's cruelty stems from her impassive self-absorption and the fear that her purity and perfection would be destroyed by an intrusion from the world of the living. Should her solitude be violated, her self-sufficiency would end and, like the "woman/That stood all bathed in blood," she would be dragged into the world of generation:

> She stood all bathed in blood; the blood begat.
> O foul, foul, foul! (Plays, 985)

Paradoxically, despite her fears, the Queen has announced that she will wed the man "that best sings his passion" for her (Plays, 980). The Daimon seeks union with one who will praise her beauty. The successful poet will reign with her in the kingdom that is out of time and space in the phaseless sphere where there is Unity of Being, for she "must be won/At a full moon in March" (Plays, 981-82).

The man who has come to claim her and to whom she is strangely attracted[106] is the Stroller's replacement, the Swineherd, "the ultimate symbol of the 'mire and blood' of human veins"[107] and of the "foul rag-and-bone shop of the heart." The diction in one of the Swineherd's speeches elucidates this symbolism:

> Queen, look at me, look long at these foul rags,
> At hair more foul and ragged than my rags;
> Look on my scratched foul flesh. Have I not come
> Through dust and mire? There in the dust and mire
> Beasts scratched my flesh; my memory too is gone,
> Because great solitudes have driven me mad.
> But when I look into a stream, the face
> That trembles upon the surface makes me think
> My origin more foul than rag or flesh. (Plays, 981)

Although the Queen expects "Some novel simile, some wild hyperbole" praising her beauty, she receives instead "Complexities of insult" from the Swineherd who informs her that, wed to him, she will receive

> A song--the night of love,
> An ignorant forest and the dung of swine. (Plays, 983, 984)

Once again we see that descent into the profane is a prerequisite to Unity of Being and transformation to the ultimate reality. Descent into the profane and the subsequent unity is the theme of the play's closing song, summed up in the refrain "desecration and the lover's night" (Plays, 989).[108]

As in The King of the Great Clock Tower, the poet is punished for his audacity, but this time it is the Queen herself who orders his execution. The resemblances between the Queen/Daimon and Leanhaun Shee are striking. Both persecute and reward the poets they love. Just before he is beheaded, the Swineherd is granted a moment of revelation as the Queen "turns towards him, her back to the audience, and slowly drops her veil" (Plays, 985). The vision is restricted to the poet, the one in the zigzag path of the Daimon's inspiration,[109] although, as in The King of the Great Clock Tower, someone does benefit from the reflection of the vision in art: the two attendants who serve as chorus demonstrate in the closing lyric that they have attained a certain understanding.[110]

The last scene of the play, as in The King of the Great Clock Tower, represents the stages leading to the union of poet and Daimon. The Queen, holding aloft the Swineherd's severed head, sings a song expressing, not terror over the coming union as in the earlier play, but her cruel love. The song is followed by her first dance during which she lays the head upon her throne; this gesture suggests the power that will come to the poet should he unite with her. The head responds to her implied invitation as it did in The King of the Great Clock Tower by singing a song of acceptance:

I sing a song of Jack and Jill.
Jill had murdered Jack;
The moon shone brightly;
Ran up the hill, and round the hill,
Round the hill and back.
A full moon in March.

Jack had a hollow heart, for Jill
Had hung his heart on high;
The moon shone brightly;
Had hung his heart beyond the hill,
A-twinkle in the sky.
A full moon in March. (Plays, 988)

Jill, the anti-self or Daimon, has brought an end to the conflict of opposites by removing Jack, the self or poet, from the cycle of reincarnation, the Great Wheel of the phases of the moon, represented by the hill Jack ran up and round. Having lost his heart to Jill, Jack has entered Phase 15, the phase of the full moon. His "hollow heart" suggests the impassiveness of the beings in that phase. The ultimate escape from Phase 15 into the condition of fire that it prefigures is also suggested by the song, for Jill has hung Jack's heart on high "beyond the hill,/A-twinkle in the sky."

The song of the severed head is followed by the continuation of the Queen's dance in which she "moves away from the head, alluring and refusing" (Plays, 988); then laying the head on the ground, "She dances before it--a dance of adoration" (Plays, 989). The usual roles of poet and Daimon have been reversed. In a note to Per Amica Silentia Lunae Yeats comments,

> When writing this essay I did not see how complete must be the antithesis between man and Daimon. The repose of man is the choice of the Daimon, and the repose of the Daimon the choice of man; and what I have called man's terrestrial state the Daimon's condition of fire.[111]

In this case, the man joins the Daimon in the condition of fire, symbolized by the union of sexual intercourse which is plainly suggested in the stage directions:

> Queen takes up the head and lays it upon the ground. She dances before it--a dance of adoration. She takes the head up and dances with it to drum-taps, which grow quicker and quicker. As the drum-taps approach their climax, she presses her lips to the lips of the head. Her body shivers to very rapid drum-taps. The drum-taps cease. She sinks slowly down, holding the head to her breast. (Plays, 989)[112]

The characters in The King of the Great Clock Tower and A Full Moon in March achieve Unity of Being. Although she also seeks it, Fand, the Woman of the Sidhe in Fighting the Waves and The Only Jealousy of Emer, does not attain Unity of Being. There are essentially two reasons for her failure. In the first place, unlike the Queens of the later plays who are impassive and coldly virginal, although she is a being of Phase 15, Fand still has desires, and as Janus warned Axël, transcendence comes only to those who have ceased to desire.[113] Fand herself recognizes her problem: "Because I long I am not complete" (Plays, 551). She has gone in search of the opposite she desires, instead of letting him seek her out as the Stroller and Swineherd seek out their Queens.

Fand's difficulty is compounded by the fact that she is drawn to a man who is himself not ready for transformation to the unity of Phase 15. Unlike the Stroller and Swineherd who belong to Phase 14 and are therefore just a step away from pure subjectivity, Cuchulain is further removed, being a man of Phase 12, "the phase of the hero" (A Vision, 127). Cuchulain is a "forerunner" (A Vision, 126) and, therefore, although approaching pure subjectivity, he is not yet sufficiently purified of objectivity, of external considerations, to enter into the self-absorption of Phase 15. He may still be distracted by memory and the call of the living. Thus, although Fand seeks to banish his memories with a kiss and in this way achieve Unity of Being with him (Plays, 555), Cuchulain must return to life, climb back onto the wheel of the phases.

The Regeneration of the Body Public: Unity of Culture

Cuchulain's fate, Yeats believes, is also his own fate, not because he belongs to the hero's crescent, but because he belongs to an age and land in which Unity of Being is not possible. In "Under Ben Bulben" he leaves as his epitaph a command to "those horsemen" of faery and "those women/Complexion and form prove superhuman," the immortals who, "Completeness of their passions won," have achieved Unity of Being (Poems, 637):

> Cast a cold eye
> On life, on death.
> Horseman, pass by! (Poems, 640)[114]

Yeats cannot join the ride of "That pale, long-visaged company" (Poems, 637), those who are in the phaseless sphere, because his nation is dominated by a people

> All out of shape from toe to top,
> Their unremembering hearts and heads
> Base-born products of base beds. (Poems, 639)

The degeneracy of what was once "the indomitable Irishry" (Poems, 640) is unfortunate because it means Unity of Culture, the national and racial equivalent to Unity of Being, does not exist, and without this unity, Yeats tells us in Autobiographies, Unity of Being on the personal level, "however wisely sought"[115] is in turn impossible.

Yeats explains in Autobiographies that Unity of Culture is achieved when all levels of society share "one mind and heart."[116] It is "defined and evoked by Unity of Image" and characterized by "some inherited subject-matter known to the whole people."[117] The role of the poet, of all artists, is, then, particularly important. James W. Flannery explains:

> The poet, as maker of images, provided a principal means whereby society attained Unity of Culture by enshrining in his art the myths and rituals of a race or nation, and by creating new images that were passed down to form that society's inherited traditions. The poet also provided a means whereby society advanced in moral character by challenging it with "related images, symbolical or evocative of the state of mind . . . the most difficult in that man, race, or nation". Such advancement occurred, Yeats believed, because "only the greatest obstacle that can be contemplated without despair rouses the will to full intensity."[118]

The city of Byzantium as it was "towards the end of the first Christian millenium"[119] epitomizes for Yeats the Unity of Culture that corresponds to Unity of Being and makes it possible:

> I think if I could be given a month of Antiquity and leave to spend it where I chose, I would spend it in Byzantium a little before Justinian opened St. Sophia and closed the Academy of Plato. I think I could find in some little wine-shop some philosophical worker in mosaic who could answer all my questions, the super-natural descending nearer to him than to Plotinus even, for the pride of his delicate skill would make what was an instrument of power to princes and clerics, a murderous madness in the mob, show as a lovely flexible presence like that of a perfect human body.
>
> I think that in early Byzantium, maybe never before or since in recorded history, religious, aesthetic and practical life were one, that architect and artificers--though not, it may be, poets, for language had been the instrument of controversy and must have grown abstract--spoke to the multitude and the few alike. The painter, the mosaic worker, the worker in gold and silver, the illuminator of sacred books, were almost impersonal, almost perhaps without the consciousness of individual

> design, absorbed in their subject-matter and that the vision of a whole people. They could copy out of old Gospel books those pictures that seemed as sacred as the text, and yet weave all into a vast design, the work of many that seemed the work of one, that made building, picture, pattern, metal-work of rail and lamp, seem but a single image; and this vision, this proclamation of their invisible master, had the Greek nobility, Satan always the still half-divine Serpent, never the horned scarecrow of the didactic Middle Ages. (A Vision, 279-80; emphasis mine)[120]

It was because he saw the eighteenth century in Ireland as most closely approximating Unity of Culture that Yeats was so attracted to writers like Swift, Burke, Berkeley, and Goldsmith, "four great minds that hated Whiggery," that

> levelling, rancorous, rational sort of mind
> That never looked out of the eye of a saint
> Or out of drunkard's eye. (Poems, 486)[121]

Yeats believed that these four were the men who shaped what was good in Irish thought and that their strength came from unity with the land and its humble people:

> They walked the roads
> Mimicking what they heard, as children mimic;
> They understood that wisdom comes of beggary. (Poems, 487)

Of his heroes' period Yeats comments in the notes to The Words upon the Window-Pane that "I seek an image of the modern mind's discovery of itself, of its own permanent form, in that one Irish century that escaped from darkness and confusion" (Plays, 958). Thus it is that in setting up Thoor Ballylee as his "powerful emblem," Yeats, announcing "That Goldsmith and the Dean, Berkeley and Burke have travelled there," declares the tower his symbol, and its winding stair his "ancestral stair" (Poems, 480, 481). Here is Yeats's "intellectual ancestry."[122]

Although at the time he would not have used the terminology, as Shirley C. Swartz points out, Yeats's early attempts to reform Irish life and culture were actually efforts "to effect a transmutation of Ireland, to arouse in her that Unity of Culture, based on enlightened patriotism and myth, which would be analogous to the individual's Unity of Being."[123] Yeats describes this period in his life in Book II of Autobiographies, "Ireland after Parnell." Yeats was thwarted, however, in his efforts to effect what James W. Flannery terms the "spiritual regeneration in the body public of Ireland."[124] In his old age Yeats grew more and more disillusioned with his country and its prospects for achieving Unity of Culture. As a consequence, his late works are frequently marked by pessimistic portraits of the degeneracy of modern civilization in general and of Ireland in particular. F.A.C. Wilson points especially to Purgatory as "a bitter commentary on the collapse of the aristocratic Ireland [Yeats] loved."[125]

For a brief period, with the Easter Rising in 1916, "When Pearse summoned Cuchulain to his side" (Poems, 611), a strange flaming up of hope and fear was kindled in Yeats as he wondered if perhaps transformation might after all be imminent for Ireland.[126] In poems like "Easter 1916" and "The Rose Tree" we see evidence of a tragic joy and dark optimism about the potential rebirth of Ireland's glory.[127] Now all is

> Transformed utterly:
> A terrible beauty is born. (Poems, 393)

Thompson describes the effect on Yeats. Earlier,

> Yeats had sided against Maud Gonne and her fanatic republicanism, and in his poem, "No Second Troy," the criticism of her and her movement is clear. Now, with O'Connell

> Street in flames and young men marching to imprisonment and execution in a captured city, it could seem that there was another Troy and a beautiful older woman to preside over its high funeral gleam. In 1902 Maud Gonne had played the beautiful woman disguised as the Shan Van Vocht in Yeats's *Cathleen ní Houlihan*; she had played the woman who seduced the young man away from his marriage bed. Now her estranged husband and the children from Drumcondra [whom Maud had sworn to undying hatred of England] were dead. An ancient heroism had returned with all of its frightening passion; something was left in Ireland beyond the paudeens who fumbled in their greasy tills. If Dublin could not achieve the grace and confident beauty of Urbino, it showed that it could achieve the more Northern, terrible beauty of death.[128]

From the revelation of this beauty might spring the Unity of Culture Yeats so desired for his people. Thompson explains:

> Yeats was elaborating a theory of personality based upon opposites to explain his own contradictions to himself, but when the Rising occurred, he had only to project his personal meditation onto the screen of history to understand how the ridiculous patriots he had known had suddenly become noble and tragic. They had achieved unity in the mask of the revolutionary martyr, and whatever fears, stupidities, or other personal limitations they possessed disappeared the moment the impersonal, tragic mask was on. But the tragic mask was not mere escape from the ordinary face, for it was held in place by blood. When the patriots kept "vivid faces" amid gray, eighteenth-century houses, they were ridiculous; they nurtured in themselves a passion that was totally out of keeping with the tawdry Dublin of petty commerce. But in persisting in immaturity, the patriots transformed and set fire to those gray, eighteenth-century houses. In being able to call in the army of the British Empire, and not merely the police, in achieving a death by firing squad, they had been "changed utterly."[129]

Perhaps the withered Irish Rose Tree could be brought back to life:

> "It needs to be but watered,"
> James Connolly replied,
> "To make the green come out again
> And spread on every side,
> And shake the blossom from the bud
> To be the garden's pride." (*Poems*, 396)

Surely if ever Ireland could achieve Unity of Culture it would be as a result of the insurrection which, by felicitous historical coincidence, instigated the transformational process that culminated in death and resurrection into beauty at Easter, the symbolical full moon in March.[130]

Unfortunately, Yeats soon concluded that Ireland, like his beloved Thoor Ballylee, was "Half dead at the top" (Poems, 480) and unable to achieve Unity of Being. Even before the coming of "The Troubles" in 1919 Yeats began to re-assess the significance of the 1916 insurrection and its aftermath. The result was the pessimism and terror of works like The Dreaming of the Bones,[131] "The Second Coming," "Meditations in Time of Civil War," and "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen." Change was immiment, but Yeats was no longer confident that it would be for the better, and his imagery reflects this fear:

> Our luck is withered away,
> And wheat in the wheat-ear withered,
> And the wind blows it away. (Plays, 776)

The Easter rebellion and its immediate consequences at first had a noble and romantic quality, but this did not endure:

> Excess of love bewildered the men of 1916; General Maxwell notwithstanding, they willed their own deaths, and the General gave them a soldier's end before a firing squad. They were not tied to trucks and dragged to bits. That was to come when General Maxwell was replaced by the Black and Tans. The executions of the patriots of 1916 do not put an irrational and savage face upon the universe. We feel sorrow, grief, but the emotions are ennobled and eased by the magnificence of the manner in which the men died: terrible, but beautiful.[132]

With the arrival of the Black and Tans a transformation takes place: "Beauty fades, and the terrible becomes Terror."[133] "Many ingenious lovely things are gone" (Poems, 428), Yeats realizes:

> Now days are dragon-ridden, the nightmare
> Rides upon sleep: a drunken soldiery
> Can leave the mother, murdered at her door,
> To crawl in her own blood, and go scot-free;
> The night can sweat with terror as before
> We pieced our thoughts into philosophy,
> And planned to bring the world under a rule,
> Who are but weasels fighting in a hole. (Poems, 429)

The nightmare gripping Ireland, Yeats concludes, is representative of a more global situation and symptomatic of the end of an era. "The strong March birds a-crow" (Plays, 776) in The Dreaming of the Bones are heralds not only of a new period in Irish history, but of a new age for the world:

> A civilisation is a struggle to keep self-control, and in this it is like some great tragic person, some Niobe who must display an almost superhuman will or the cry will not touch our sympathy. The loss of control over thought comes towards the end; first a sinking in upon the moral being, then the last surrender, the irrational cry, revelation--the scream of Juno's peacock. (A Vision, 268)

That scream cannot be far off, Yeats feels, for "Irrational streams of blood are staining earth" (Poems, 564); the current civilization has definitely lost control:

> Turning and turning in the widening gyre
> The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
> Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
> Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
> The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
> The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
> The best lack all conviction, while the worst
> Are full of passionate intensity.
>
> Surely some revelation is at hand;
> Surely the Second Coming is at hand. (Poems, 401-02)

Just what the Second Coming and the new era will be like, no one knows exactly. As a consequence, the first reaction is terror:

> The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
> When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi
> Troubles my sight: somewhere in the sands of the desert

A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
The darkness drops again; but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born? (Poems, 402)

But for Yeats the terror does not last because he is confident that the history of the universe, like the history of the individual and the nation, is marked by the alternation of contrary cycles or gyres. "An age is the reversal of an age" (Poems, 541), and so the new era will be the opposite of the present primary/objective age and will therefore bring back with it all the antithetical/subjective qualities that Yeats so admires and has long lamented: such qualities as multiplicity, freedom, kinship, creativity and art, aristocracy and tradition. Because of his confidence in the transformational powers of the gyres of history, Yeats is able to turn from pessimism to "laugh in tragic joy" (Poems, 564):

What matter though numb nightmare ride on top,
And blood and mire the sensitive body stain?
What matter? Heave no sigh, let no tear drop,
A greater, a more gracious time has gone;
For painted forms or boxes of make-up
In ancient tombs I sighed, but not again;
What matter? Out of cavern comes a voice,
And all it knows is that one word "Rejoice!"

Conduct and work grow coarse, and coarse the soul,
What matter? Those that Rocky Face holds dear,
Lovers of horses and of women, shall,
From marble of a broken sepulchre,
Or dark betwixt the polecat and the owl,
Or any rich, dark nothing disinter
The workman, noble and saint, and all things run
On that unfashionable gyre again. (Poems, 564-65)[134]

Much of Yeats's later work is concerned with the reversal of the gyres and the opposition between subjective and objective on both the individual and universal planes. Since it is impossible here to treat all the pertinent material, I shall limit myself to an examination of a small but exceedingly important group of related images intimately associated with the opposition between primary and antithetical and with the transformation of the gyres. The focus of this group of images is Michael Robartes, the fictional character who, Yeats tells us, discovered both the Speculum Angelorum et Homihum of Giraldus and the learning of Kusta ben Luka preserved in the "desert geometry" of the Judwalis--the fictional dual sources of the system presented in A Vision.[135] The final section of this chapter, then, is concerned with Michael Robartes and his friends as they appear in Yeats's later works.

Michael Robartes and his Friends: The Personae of the Phantasmagoria

In Chapter Two I left the study of Robartes and his circle of "friends" (including Aedh, Hanrahan, Owen Aherne, the three "magi," and the narrator of the Rosa Alchemica stories) with "The Adoration of the Magi." Although Yeats had killed Michael Robartes off at the end of "Rosa Alchemica" and assigned Owen Aherne to exile in "some distant country" at the conclusion of "The Tables of the Law,"[136] he was not finished with these characters and their friends. When he began to work on A Vision Yeats decided to resurrect his old characters and include them in a "set of poems, dialogues and stories" (Poems, 830) surrounding and explaining or elaborating on various aspects of A Vision.

"Ego Dominus Tuus" is the first of the works concerned with Yeats's system in which members of the Robartes circle appear.[137] The only name from the circle mentioned in the poem is that of Robartes, whose open book lies beside the burning lamp in Ille's "old wind-beaten tower" (Poems, 367). The poem is important in the present context, however, because of the characters who participate in the dialogue. Their designations as "Hic" and "Ille" establish them as representatives of the two opposing forces which in Yeats's system determine all of life and history: the primary and the antithetical.

Hic is primary, modern man, the here, now, the latter age characterized by action, love of life, pursuit of the objective self.[138] Ille is antithetical, the then, the former glorious age characterized by song, tragic war, and--"By the help of an image" (Poems, 367)--pursuit of the opposite. Ille is thus closely linked with Robartes (who, we have seen, is an antithetical character), and at the same time with the narrator of "Rosa Alchemica" and its companion stories. Hic and Ille are particularly interesting because they stand as liaison between the early and the later stories and poems which focus on the Robartes group. They are incarnations of the duality in the earlier narrator's personality and at the same time prefigure the characters of the later Aherne and of the fictional "Mr. Yeats."

The brief reference in "Ego Dominus Tuus" to "the open book/That Michael Robartes left" (Poems, 367) gives only a very small hint of the significance Robartes and his friends were to have in Yeats's later work. As the system of A Vision gradually took shape, Yeats began to erect a fictional superstructure to contain it and display it to the public. Michael Robartes and his friends became an integral part of this fiction; in fact, Yeats originally began writing A Vision as a dialogue between Robartes and Aherne.[139] Although the fictional superstructure remains an unfinished "aggregation of fragments, a constructed ruin,"[140] it is nonetheless important for an understanding of Yeats's later work.

Yeats commits himself fully to the resurrection of Robartes and Aherne in the 1919 edition of The Wild Swans at Coole. At this point, however, the Aherne has for the moment changed from Owen to John. Yeats opens the volume with a Preface explaining who Robartes and Aherne are, and why the latter seems bitter about Yeats:

> Michael Robartes and John Aherne, whose names occur in one or other of these [poems], are characters in some stories I wrote years ago, who have once again become a part of the phantasmagoria through which I can alone express my convictions about the world. I have the fancy that I read the name John Aherne among those of men prosecuted for making a disturbance at the first production of "The Play Boy," which may account for his animosity to myself. (Poems, 852)

Sidnell notes that "There is clearly a confusion of two Ahernes" in Yeats's mind, for the man who appears in the early stories is not John Aherne, but Owen: "To make good what was evidently a slip, Yeats split the one Aherne into a pair of brothers; and so a character got himself born."[141] We can see this split happening in a note dated 1922 and attached in Later Poems (1922) to "The Phases of the Moon," "The Double Vision of Michael Robartes," and "Michael Robartes and the Dancer":

> Years ago I wrote three stories in which occurs [sic] the names of Michael Robartes and Owen Aherne. I now consider that I used the actual names of two friends, and that one of these friends, Michael Robartes, has but lately returned from Mesopotamia where he has partly found and partly thought out much philosophy. I consider that John Aherne is either the original Owen Aherne or some near relation of the man that was, and that both he and Robartes, to whose namesake I had attributed a turbulent life and death, have quarrelled with me. They take their place in a phantasmagoria in which I endeavour to explain my phlosophy [sic] of life and death, and till that philosophy has found some detailed exposition in prose certain passages in the poems named above may seem obscure. To some extent I wrote them as a text for exposition. --1922. (Poems, 821)[142]

Although Yeats does not give a Christian name to the Aherne character in the poems in The Wild Swans at Coole, between Owen Aherne's retirement from the world in "The Tables of the Law" and the note to Later Poems, in Yeats's mind the character called simply Aherne is named John, not Owen.[143] Later, Owen is brought back and both characters appear together in Yeats's work (for example, in Stories of Michael Robartes and his Friends).

The Preface to The Wild Swans at Coole serves as introduction to "The Phases of the Moon" (a dialogue between Robartes and Aherne) and to "The Double Vision of Michael Robartes." The first of these poems, devoted as we have seen to an exposition of the Giraldus/Robartes/Yeats system, reveals that the story of Robartes' death was a "fiction" concocted by "Mr. Yeats" (who remains nameless in the poem but is clearly the persona who plays such an important role later in Stories of Michael Robartes and his Friends). The poem presents Robartes and Aherne as two old men tramping through the Irish countryside late at night. The account of their progress is an interesting detail, for it suggests an alchemical peregrinatio and calls to mind the three old men of "The Adoration of the Magi," who "had been commanded to travel over Ireland continually, and upon foot and at night, that they might live close to the stones and the trees and at the hours when the Immortals are awake."[144] Yeats himself must have thought the detail of the peregrination not insignificant for he has John Aherne allude to it at the beginning of his letter addressed to "Mr. Yeats" in Stories of Michael Robartes and his Friends: "There are diaries kept by my brother Owen during their [Robartes' and Aherne's] tramps in Ireland in 1919, 1922 and 1923" (A Vision, 53).

Like the three old men in "The Adoration of the Magi," Robartes has found the secret of existence; unlike the "magi," however, he does not reveal it to the Yeats figure. Robartes has not yet become active in the transformation of individuals in preparation for the transformation of the world from primary to antithetical gyre. He will assume this role only later in the fiction. In "The Phases of the Moon," his wisdom remains secret. In fact, Robartes prefers to continue the fiction of his death, and Aherne, to whom he has revealed his secret wisdom, has no intention of sharing it with the Yeats figure, for he has only scorn for the man in the tower, with "His sleepless candle and laborious pen" (Poems, 375). This man is Ille, still seeking the answer to the mysteries of existence, but he has now returned to the books he left neglected in "Ego Dominus Tuus."

In their notes to the 1925 edition of A Vision, George Mills Harper and Walter Kelly Hood comment on the ironic significance of the characters in "The Phases of the Moon":

> As to the meaning of the characters in context, the Christian, orthodox Aherne invariably misses the real point, and Robartes and Yeats are much closer; however, Robartes and Aherne are partly two sides of the Yeatsian character, two complementary masks. . . .
>
> Throughout the poem, the magus Robartes has a somewhat abstracted air and never properly responds to Aherne's personal and ideological demands for exclusive attention. The point of view through which the reader's observations are focused is that of Aherne, a fallible and naive narrator, while Robartes cares only for the philosophy which he expounds; hence, those critics are probably correct who suppose the final lines to indicate that the Tower's inhabitant has found his solution to the problem of life in spite of Aherne's malicious glee.[145]

"The Double Vision of Michael Robartes," which we have seen elaborates on two particular phases of Yeats's system (the first and the fifteenth), adds interesting details to the Robartes' dossier. The emphasis in the poem on the fifteenth phase confirms that at heart Robartes is an antithetical man, and yet he describes himself as "Being caught between the pull/Of the dark moon and the full" (_Poems_, 384). He resembles Aherne and the narrator of "Rosa Alchemica" in being torn between opposites. All three characters bear witness to the constant presence of both the contraries, despite the dominance of one or other in a particular individual, nation, or era. It is the tug of war between the contraries that effects transformation.

Two other details in "The Double Vision of Michael Robartes" are of special interest here. The first is Michael Robartes' "almost inconceivable role" as poet[146]—he arranges his double vision into a song. This is the second and last time that Robartes is presented as a poet: the first is in "The Phases of the Moon" where he sings the changes of the moon to Aherne, "True song, though speech" (_Poems_, 373).[147]

In the later stories Robartes is described as being inarticulate. Aherne says of him that "Certainly no man had ever less gift of expression."[148] Wise as he may be, his notes and diagrams are, nonetheless, "often confused and rambling" and his verbal explanations "almost as obscure."[149] Robartes suffers from the inarticulateness of the sage who turns "the life inward at the tongue" (Poems, 849) because he is absorbed with inner truths and ineffable mysteries.

It is because of Robartes' lack of literary talent that Aherne and, eventually, "Mr. Yeats" become involved in the publication of the Robartes material that evolved into A Vision. The partnership thus produced the felicitous but uncommon union of "abstract wisdom and concrete expression"[150] which permits the communication of vision. The cooperation of Robartes, Aherne and "Mr. Yeats" in their literary venture is thus an image for the creation of poetry. Sidnell explains:

> Robartes' wisdom needs Yeats's passionate attachment to life for its embodiment and, if the poetry is to be more than a lyrical representation of the accidents of life, then some such abstractions as those of Robartes are needful to it.[151]

Finally we should note Robartes' fascination in "The Double Vision of Michael Robartes" with the dancer, in this case, the "girl at play" who dances between the guardians of the fifteenth phase. She is the incarnation of perfect beauty, Robartes' ideal, and thus the appropriate symbol for the art of the antithetical phase, which seeks to embody beauty rather than to communicate rational thought: "she had outdanced thought./Body perfection brought" (Poems, 383). Robartes' interest in the dancer continues in the later works; for example, in "Michael Robartes and the Dancer," A Vision (1925), Stories of Michael Robartes and his Friends, and the second version of A Vision.

"Michael Robartes and the Dancer" expounds Robartes' theory on female education. For Robartes, as for the archdeacon in Axël, woman is to be seen and not heard; hence the dancer is an image of the perfect woman. Robartes' views on womanhood are not simply anti-suffragette and "woman's lib," however, for there is an important philosophical basis for his opposition to women who think.[152] As an antithetical man, Robartes firmly believes in the beauty and goodness of the body and in the divisive nature of thought:

> Did God in portioning wine and bread
> Give man His thought or His mere body? . . .
> I have principles to prove me right.
> It follows from this Latin text
> That blest souls are not composite,
> And that all beautiful women may
> Live in uncomposite blessedness,
> And lead us to the like--if they
> Will banish every thought, unless
> The lineaments that please their view
> When the long looking-glass is full,
> Even from the foot-sole think it too. (Poems, 386-87)

Besides the title poem, references to the Robartes circle are found in a number of places in the volume Michael Robartes and the Dancer (finished in 1920 and published in 1921). The book includes a preface which mentions Robartes' exposition of the Speculum Angelorum et Hominum, as well as a selection from the "letters and table talk" of Robartes, which Yeats says he intends to publish, courtesy of Robartes' friend, John Aherne (Poems, 853). Although it is usurped for a time by Owen in the first version of A Vision, John Aherne maintains his role as literary executor to Robartes as late as A Vision (1937).[153]

Michael Robartes and the Dancer also includes two long notes containing references to the Robartes circle. The first is attached to "An Image from a Past Life" and concerns a letter from Robartes to Aherne which gives biographical details on Kusta-ben-Luki that are pertinent to the poem. The note also discusses the two types of image and of memory--abstract and concrete. The second note is to "The Second Coming." It concerns Robartes' diagrams of the system and explains the mathematical movement of the "mind" which, according to its centripetal or centrifugal direction determines the characteristics of the individual or the era. The movement of the mind, "whether expressed in history or in the individual life" (Poems, 823), may be represented by the figure of the double cone or interpenetrating gyres. This note is a particularly important one, since it contains in outline a good deal of what Yeats later incorporated into A Vision, including the basic distinction between objective and subjective man, what happens at death, the parallel between the individual and the world, and the division of the gyres into stages or phases. The prose note picks up the gyre imagery of "The Second Coming" and elaborates on the suggestions of the impending transformation of the world contained in the poem:

> The man, in whom the movement inward is stronger than the movement outward, the man who sees all reflected within himself, the subjective man, reaches the narrow end of a gyre at death, for death is always, [the Judwalis] contend, even when it seems the result of accident, preceded by an intensification of the subjective life; and has a moment of revelation immediately after death, a revelation which they describe as his being carried into the presence of all his dead kindred, a moment whose objectivity is exactly equal to the subjectivity of death. The objective man on the other hand, whose gyre moves outward,

> receives at this moment the revelation, not of himself seen from within, for that is impossible to objective man, but of himself as if he were somebody else. This figure is true also of history, for the end of an age, which always receives the revelation of the character of the next age, is represented by the coming of one gyre to its place of greatest expansion and of the other to that of its greatest contraction. At the present moment the life gyre is sweeping outward, unlike that before the birth of Christ which was narrowing, and has almost reached its greatest expansion. The revelation which approaches will however take its character from the contrary movement of the interior gyre. All our scientific, democratic, fact-accumulating, heterogeneous civilization belongs to the outward gyre and prepares not the continuance of itself but the revelation as in a lightning flash, though in a flash that will not strike only in one place, and will for a time be constantly repeated, of the civilization that must slowly take its place. (Poems, 824-25)

The Giraldus/Robartes/Yeats system and its fictional superstructure receive further fragmented treatment in the notes to three of the Four Plays for Dancers (1921). Notes on The Only Jealousy of Emer, The Dreaming of the Bones, and Calvary treat, for example, woman's beauty and its relationship to the system--"A saint or sage before his final deliverance [from the wheel of reincarnations] has one incarnation as a woman of supreme beauty" (Plays, 566); the after-life state of the Dreaming Back; and the use of bird symbolism to suggest the opposition between subjective and objective natures.[154]

"The Gift of Harun Al-Rashid" and the note Yeats contributed on it in The Dial (June, 1924), although not directly concerned with Robartes and his contemporaries, provide several interesting links with them.[155] Sidnell describes the poem as "almost the final stage of the attempt to combine lyric poetry, vision, and systematic philosophy into one vast fictive structure."[156] The poem takes the form of a letter written by Kusta ben Luka "To Abd Al-Rabban; fellow-roysterer once" (Poems, 460) at the court of the Caliph, Harun Al-Rashid. It describes how Kusta discovered his philosophical system in a manner strikingly similar to the actual conditions under which Yeats's system came to him. An opposition is established between the Caliph (a man of action interested in the animal nature of man, his mortality), and Kusta ben Luka (a Christian philosopher interested in the "higher" nature of man, his immortality): "The dialogue of the Caliph and Kusta" Sidnell remarks, "is yet another dialogue of body and soul."[157]

At the urging of the Caliph, Kusta marries a young girl who, in the early days of her marriage, takes great interest in his books and in "the stark mystery" (Poems, 466) he pursues. Then one moonless night she begins to talk in her sleep and to expound upon the mystery. The parallels with the real Mrs. Yeats and also with the dying woman of "The Adoration of the Magi" are obvious. When Kusta's wife awakens she has no knowledge of what she has said. Later, on a night of full moon she sleep-walks to the desert and draws the diagrams of the system in the sand, and so,

> All, all those gyres and cubes and midnight things
> Are but a new expression of her body
> Drunk with the bitter sweetness of her youth.
> And now my utmost mystery is out.
> A woman's beauty is a storm-tossed banner;
> Under it wisdom stands. . . . (Poems, 469)

Sidnell points out that "The Gift of Harun Al-Rashid"

> departs from the pattern firmly established in Yeats's earlier work; instead of the descent back into nature from some transcendent state (as with Oisin, Hanrahan, or even Solomon) the miracle occurs. Both the woman and wisdom are won.[158]

Despite her "midnight" discourses, like the dying woman of "The Adoration of the Magi" and like Mary Bell in Stories of Michael Robartes and his Friends, Kusta's wife maintains her innocence, her ignorance of the contribution she is making to her husband's knowledge. She is free from the taint of thought. Her "first unnatural interest" (Poems, 468) in Kusta's books disappears and she becomes in the day time "a merry girl with no more interest in matters of the kind than other girls of her age" (Poems, 829). Little Judwali girls are encouraged to emulate her lack of interest in philosophy, to scorn thought like Michael Robartes' dancer. Yeats's note to the poem ties Kusta to the early narrator and to Aherne and Robartes. One tradition says that before his marriage Kusta (like the first two characters) planned "to end his days in a monastery at Nisibis, while another story has it that [like Robartes] he was deep in a violent love-affair that he had arranged for himself" (Poems, 828-29).

One of the most important sources on Michael Robartes and company is the first edition of A Vision. It includes an Introduction by Owen Aherne that describes the fictional origins of A Vision and how, after a quarrel between Aherne and Robartes, "Mr. Yeats" came to be in charge of writing up the explanation of the system. Aherne, we are told, had known Robartes "in the late Eighties and early Nineties," but after quarrelling with him over "matters of theological difference"[159] had not seen him since. In the spring of 1917, however, Aherne ran into Robartes in the National Gallery before a Pre-Raphaelite painting. Aherne describes him as having an erect, athletic body, sundried and tanned, grey hair fading into white in places, and a hawk-like profile. Clearly the image of the antithetical man established in the early stories continues in Yeats's depiction of Robartes in the later work.

The hawk-like profile is particularly important for it underlines the predatory, destructive, animal nature of the antithetical phase.[160]

When Aherne alludes to the "travesty of real events" presented in "Rosa Alchemica" and "The Tables of the Law," Robartes explains that although he has not forgiven him, he is nonetheless rather grateful to "Mr. Yeats" for having inadvertently permitted him solitude by reporting his "death."[161] Robartes describes his life after the "Rosa Alchemica" experiences as one of division with "periods of pleasure, or at least of excitement, that alternated with periods of ascetism,"[162] and we are reminded of his vacillation in "The Double Vision of Michael Robartes." There is something of Hanrahan's fickle lechery and much of defiance in the way Robartes turns from a love affair with a ballet dancer to one with "a fiery handsome girl of the poorer classes."[163] Significantly, it is through this latter girl that he is first put on the road to enlightenment, for, "One night I was thrown out of bed and when I lit my tallow candle found that the bed, which had fallen at one end, had been propped up by a joint stool and an old book bound in calf."[164] The book was the fateful Speculum Angelorum et Hominum of Giraldus. Echoes of "The Adoration of the Magi" are set up when we learn that among other diagrams and pictures in this book is a "portrait" of a unicorn.

After a quarrel with his "beggar maid" Robartes turns from a life of sensual pleasure to one of asceticism. This change illustrates again the internal pull between contraries (paralleled by the paradoxical nature of the Judwalis who are notorious for their violent contrasts, "for their licentiousness and their sanctity").[165] Sidnell points out that "Robartes's career . . . with its vacillating pursuit of arcane knowledge and sensual excitement, embodies his later discoveries. But Robartes is apparently unaware that he has lived his thought before formulating it."[166]

Robartes sets out on a sacred peregrination, journeying first to Jerusalem and the Holy Sepulchre, then to Damascus, and then towards Mecca. On his way he discovers markings on the sand which correspond to Giraldus' diagrams and wanders for months in the desert in search of the Arab tribe that drew them. Hanrahan's restless questing has been taken over by Robartes.

After a description of his life and pursuits among the Judwalis, Robartes requests that Aherne arrange and publish his explanation of the system. Aherne agrees and his friendship with Robartes grows until they quarrel again over Aherne's religious beliefs. Another opposition is thus set up between these characters, much stronger this time than that we have seen previously. Aherne is presented as primary man, an enlightened but nonetheless orthodox Christian, in fact Catholic, uninterested in and unable to accept the opposite or antithetical phase. In The Identity of Yeats Ellmann prints an unpublished manuscript, very similar to the final paragraphs of Aherne's Introduction, which contains an interesting paragraph in relation to Aherne's Christianity:

> It was only, however, on our return to London, on the eve of [Robartes'] final departure, that I understood that he was the same passionate, capricious man I had known in my youth. At the time of our old theological difference I had repudiated his whole view of life with vehemence, and because I could now consider any point of view dispassionately, and could even explain it to

> others without insisting upon my own, he seemed to think I was no longer a Catholic. I had given much time and thought to his rambling notes and ill-drawn diagrams, and had shown that they interested me as a contribution to religious history, and he had come to consider me, it seems, as his disciple. I was discussing the general arrangement of the proposed book, when I used these words, "In the introduction I will of course explain my own point of view: that I concede to this Arabian system exactly the same measure of belief that an intelligent reader concedes to a Platonic myth."[167]

Robartes, on the other hand, is, as we have noted, antithetical man. Like Pater's Marius the Epicurean he is basically a pagan eclectic who accepts whatever is beautiful and, therefore, sensually appealing. His "beliefs" are more a matter of aesthetics than of faith. The quarrel with Aherne leads Robartes to give his material to "Mr. Yeats," an act which elicits from Aherne several nasty comments on "Mr. Yeats's" character. He is a man

> who has thought more of the love of women than of the love of God. . . . Mr. Yeats has intellectual belief but he is entirely without moral faith, without that sense, which should come to a man with terror and joy, of a Divine Presence, and though he may seek, and may have always sought it, I am certain that he will not find it in this life.[168]

Robartes, however, does not put much stress on faith. He wants "a lyric poet, and if he cares for nothing but expression, so much the better, my desert geometry will take care of the truth."[169] Robartes is expressing the symbolist position on art.

Eventually Aherne and "Mr. Yeats" are reconciled and agree to produce the volume on the system jointly; Aherne explains, "Mr. Yeats consented to write the exposition on the condition that I wrote the introduction and any notes I pleased."[170] The unpublished manuscript quoted by Ellmann describes the collaboration a little more fully:

> Then Mr. Yeats suggested that I [Aherne] should write the preface to his book and annotate his text here and there. "That," he said, "will show that Robartes was the first discoverer and it will be of great value to the exposition. I will explain this philosophy in its isolated abstract form, you in its concrete form as a part of history.[171]

This is precisely the relationship of the Aherne and "Mr. Yeats" material in the first edition of A Vision, for besides the Introduction, Aherne contributes four parenthetical notes to "Mr. Yeats's" text, one expressing his own views of the Celestial Body, and three describing psychic phenomena experienced by Robartes while in Arabia.[172] In the revised edition of A Vision the experiences Michael Robartes undergoes are attributed to Yeats and his wife.[173]

Robartes returns to Mesopotamia and is not heard of again. Aherne closes his Introduction with a parting shot at "Mr. Yeats" which sums up their two characters:

> Mr. Yeats's completed manuscript now lies before me. The system itself has grown clearer for his concrete expression of it, but I notice that if I made too little of the antithetical phases he has done no better by the primary.[174]

It is interesting that in the unpublished manuscript, "Mr. Yeats" arrives on his own at diagrams and conclusions almost identical with those of Robartes.

Two things further should be mentioned about the first edition of A Vision. In the notes that Aherne supplies we see his continued interest in the primary or Christian phases, and in "The Dance of the Four Royal Persons" (Aherne's prose record of a late incident in the life of Kusta ben Luka), we discover his scepticism, for he doubts the authenticity of the story he there relates.[175] Indeed, Aherne's tone throughout the whole of his contribution to A Vision is one of scepticism and condescension. His attitude, of course, is not surprising for a primary (that is rational) man describing antithetical (that is, irrational) experiences.

Stories of Michael Robartes and his Friends rounds out the picture Yeats presents of Robartes, the two Ahernes, and "Mr. Yeats," and introduces us to five new characters: Peter Huddon, John Duddon, Daniel O'Leary, Denise de L'Isle Adam, John Bond, and Mary Bell. The Stories, originally published in 1932 by Elizabeth Corbet Yeats, were printed with revisions in the 1937 and subsequent versions of A Vision.[176] They are the longest and most comprehensive presentation of Michael Robartes and company, and Yeats's last published treatment of these characters. Sidnell points out that the Stories are not only a burlesque, but a justification of "Yeats's metaphysical and occult preoccupations, from the early interest in magic to the late belief in spiritualism, and including A Vision."[177] With the other introductory material in the revised A Vision, the Stories "offer distinct and partly ironical perspectives of the systematic books which follow."[178] They are introduced by a short untitled poem about "Huddon, Duddon and Daniel O'Leary," following which there is a narration by "John Duddon," and a letter to "Mr. Yeats" from John Aherne.[179]

Duddon's narration is in four parts. The first consists of brief explanations of how he, Peter Huddon, Daniel O'Leary, and Denise de L'Isle Adam come to be sitting "round a fire at eleven o'clock at night on the ground floor of a house in Albert Road, Regent's Park" (A Vision, 33). The second part presents Owen Aherne and Michael

Robartes, and describes the latter's discovery of *Speculum Angelorum et Hominum* by Giraldus. In Part III, by explaining why she "insists on calling herself Denise de L'Isle Adam" (*A Vision*, 35), Denise provides an ironic link between the *Stories* and *Axël*. John Bond and Mary Bell are introduced in Part III and the story of their illicit love is told. Part IV reveals the task that Mary Bell is to undertake with Owen Aherne and Robartes and records extracts from Robartes' "long discourse founded upon the philosophy of the Judwalis and of Giraldus" (*A Vision*, 51). John Aherne's letter to "Mr. Yeats" continues the fiction of the characters' reality and ties the *Stories* to the early *Rosa Alchemica* tales.

Since John Aherne's letter is designed primarily to contribute an air of reality to the Robartes fiction and to tie the *Stories* to the early tales, Aherne mentions the tramps of his brother and Robartes through Ireland, and retells (with variations and additions to the version presented earlier) the story of the Robartes/Aherne/"Mr. Yeats" quarrel. John Aherne even steps forward as a champion of "Mr. Yeats's" early style when it is attacked by Robartes. The attempt to maintain the illusion is not, however, as vigorous as it was in the first edition of *A Vision*, for the letter contains a clue to the whole fiction. Neither Huddon nor John Aherne finds it unusual that "Mr. Yeats" should have come separately to the same results as Giraldus and Kusta ben Luka.

> I [John Aherne] recall what Plato said of memory, and suggest that your [Yeats's] automatic script, or whatever it was, may well have been but a process of remembering. I think that Plato symbolised by the word "memory" a relation to the timeless, but Duddon *is more*

> *literal and discovers a resemblance between your face and that of Giraldus in the* Speculum. (*A Vision*, 54; emphasis mine)

Within the context of the *Stories* and the system, Duddon is speaking about reincarnation, but from another point of view he is saying "Yeats invented the whole kit and caboodle."

There are several interesting and significant variations in the two editions of the *Stories*. The final line of the introductory poem, for instance, changes from "But how they mock us burning out" in the original edition, to "I mock at all so burning out" in *A Vision*. This change indicates an alteration in the poet's perspective. In the first version the "Hard-living men and men of thought" may be burning "their bodies up for nought," but they are convinced of their position and deride the rest of mankind (*Poems*, 787). The revision reverses the mockery: it is the "I" of the poem who now ridicules the Huddons, Duddons, and Daniel O'Learys of the world.

In Part III of the narration proper there is another important change. Denise's explanation of her name is a two-page addition to the *Stories* in the 1937 edition. It replaces the following passage in the original:

> Her story was never told; for at that moment Aherne ushered in a pale slight woman of thirty five and a spectacled man who seemed somewhat older. When Aherne had found them chairs Robartes said: "We will call them John Bond and Mary Bell from the characters in the doggerel of Blake's. For reasons which will become apparent when you have heard their story you must not know their true names. Aherne brought them from Ireland that you may hear it and because Mary Bell's a suitable guardian and bearer for what I carry in this box."[180]

Although it remained unpublished, there is also a manuscript entitled "Michael Robartes Foretells"[181] which seems to have been intended at one time as a sequel to Stories of Michael Robartes and his Friends. Set seven years after the Stories, the first section presents O'Leary, Huddon, Duddon, and Denise in discussion over the prospects of a future in which communism and fascism are strong forces. Part II of the manuscript records Robartes' predictions for the final phases of the primary age as the revolving wheel of civilization returns towards the antithetical.

The introductory poem of the Stories is important because, with its nursery-rhyme rhythm it establishes the humorous tone of the Stories. It also gives a synopsis of Huddon, Duddon, and Daniel O'Leary. Before Yeats took them over, these three characters were "hard-living men," a "roaring, ranting crew" who "Danced, laughed, loved, fought through/Their brief lives" (Poems, 787).[182] Yeats makes them into "men of thought" "That despair and keep the pace/And love wench Wisdom's cruel face" (Poems, 787). This transformation, although it is not dwelt upon there, occurs in the Stories themselves as a result of Michael Robartes' intrusion into their lives. Ironically, Robartes incites Huddon, Duddon, and Daniel O'Leary to become his students because he is attracted to their way of life, and yet by teaching them his philosophy he transforms them from hard-living men to men of thought.

Whatever they are, they "Burn their bodies up for nought" (Poems, 787). This is an important image, for it is a significant variation on the figure of fire or flame, which we have seen recurs throughout Yeats's work, generally in dual association with creativity and destruction. As early as the Dedication to The Secret Rose (1897) Yeats speaks of making poetry and romance, not of

> the most conscientious study of famous moments and of the thoughts and feelings of others, but only by looking into that little, infinite, faltering, eternal flame that one calls one's self.[183]

When a flame burns, however, it consumes that which feeds it. In the poem "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory" Yeats notes that,

> Some burn damp faggots, others may consume
> The entire combustible world in one small room
> As though dried straw, and if we turn about
> The bare chimney is gone black out
> Because the work had finished in that flare. (Poems, 327)

In the prose of Stories of Michael Robartes and his Friends, Yeats picks up the image of burning out found in the introductory poem and uses it in two connections. The image is associated with civilization: "Have I proved that civilisations come to an end when they have given all their light like burned-out wicks, that ours is near its end?" and "Has our age burned to the socket?" (A Vision, 50, 52). Yeats also associates the image of burning out with his own art: Robartes objects to "Mr. Yeats's" style in the early stories and says that "when the candle was burnt out an honest man did not pretend that grease was flame" (A Vision, 55).[184]

Yeats has modified the image of fire from the early Aedh, Hanrahan, and Robartes poems by extending it to include not only the life of the imagination, but also the very existence of the individual and society. There is a change, however, in Yeats's attitude in Stories of Michael Robartes and his Friends. In the earlier works, as in the poem on Gregory, although he realizes the danger inherent in the fire, Yeats nonetheless seems to admire and perhaps envy those who commit themselves to the burning up. They are like the Phoenix that rises from the ashes transformed and revitalized. In the Stories, particularly the revised version in A Vision (1937), Yeats no longer looks with admiration on those who burn out--it is "for nought": the Phoenix is, after all, an imaginary creature, and "to die into the truth is still to die" (A Vision, 271). Now in the Stories Yeats mocks "at all so burning out"; in fact, the tone of the Stories suggests that he is, however gently, mocking all he once held dear, including symbolist verse drama, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam's Axël, and the Leda myth.[185] The mockery extends from the introductory poem throughout the Stories and, as the closing letter by John Aherne suggests, is directed not only at Yeats himself, but also at his readers.[186]

More can be said of Huddon, Duddon, and Daniel O'Leary than that they are burning out. Daniel O'Leary is a young man of the same generation as Huddon, Duddon, and Denise. A poet who wishes to establish a small theatre for verse plays, he resembles his author in many ways. Strongly opposed to realism in the theatre, he acts rather foolishly and very impetuously in hurling his boots at the actors in a realistic production of Romeo and Juliet. His protest fails (the boots fall short) and he flees in panic. Owen Aherne picks him up, gives him socks and a pair of boots (that are too large), and he goes to live in the house in Albert Road, Regent's Park, where he has been staying for six or seven months when the story opens. To prevent gossip, O'Leary acts as chauffeur when disciples are gathered for Robartes.

Peter Huddon is a "tall fair young man" (A Vision, 35) who, according to Duddon, gets everything he wants, including women. He is adviser and patron to the rash Duddon, and war is his profession. Duddon, who narrates the Stories, is a close friend of Huddon's; in fact, their friendship extends to the sharing of mistresses. Nonetheless, Duddon is jealous of Huddon, of his self-assurance and his success with women, particularly Denise. Duddon is a painter and much like O'Leary, the other artist in the tale, for he, too, acts impetuously (he hits Aherne over the head when he mistakes him for Huddon) and then responds with fear. In the revised edition, Yeats stresses Duddon's faintheartedness, extending it even into sexual matters. Duddon calls himself a coward who is "afraid of unfamiliar women in pyjamas," although Denise insists he is simply shy (A Vision, 42).

If Huddon, the soldier, the confident man of the world, is thesis, primary man, and Duddon, the artist, the timid, unworldly man, antithesis or antithetical man, then in alchemical terms Denise is the "humide radicale" or "principe de liaison" that effects the synthesis of the two contraries into one whole, for as mistress to both men she literally embodies the reconciliation of the opposites that they are. Love is her profession, and like the beautiful woman of "The Adoration of the Magi" and Kusta ben Luka's wife, it is through her unwitting agency that the men are brought to enlightenment.[187] Sidnell explains the relationship between Huddon, Duddon, and Denise. Denise,

> as her name suggests, is a somewhat tarnished aesthete. Denise de L'Isle Adam and her lover (like Axel and Sarah [sic]) had found no satisfactory bodily expression for the love of souls. Through her lover's physical reserve, however, she has made a modest discovery: "Oh, my dear, how delightful; now I know all about Axel. He was just shy" [A Vision, 43]. She values Duddon's soulful shyness and, moreover, overcomes its major deficiency. As for loving, his patron can do that for him; so Huddon becomes the willing instrument of bodily expression. Huddon and Duddon are allegorically, of course, like the Caliph and Kusta, halves of the one man; in them and Denise we have some such compromise between body and soul as marriage, illustrating Robartes' doctrine given in the story that "The marriage bed is the symbol of the solved antinomy, and were more than symbol could a man there lose and keep his identity, but he falls asleep" [A Vision, 52]. The masks are not opaque, but the farce is not mere disguise for autobiography. It is a stylization through which the allegorical character of experience and the continuum of life and art is made manifest. Through the burlesque of the decadent style also, Yeats makes an amusing criticism of the notion of the autonomy of art, its separateness from nature.[188]

The other woman in the Stories is Mary Bell,[189] "a pale slight woman of thirty-five" (A Vision, 42) who has been chosen by Robartes as the suitable guardian for Leda's third egg because, like Leda, she is basically a good woman and faithful wife who has fallen victim to an inescapable fate, and she is also the mother of an illegitimate child born while she was married to someone other than the father.[190] Like most of Yeats's human women, Mary Bell represents the body. Despite the fact that she is to be the vehicle of its fulfilment, Robartes does not instruct Mary in his philosophical system, because, like Yeats's other human women, she is to be a sort of unmoved mover of men. It is vital that both she and Leda, for whom she is a substitute, remain totally ignorant of the future lest they be terrified and refuse to cooperate.

Mary Bell's lover and the real father of her child is John Bond, "a spectacled man who seemed somewhat older" (A Vision, 42). His role is relatively unimportant except as an element in Mary's story: he is the cuckoo who has laid his egg in another bird's nest and has thus turned Mary into a Leda figure and suitable guardian of the egg. The story of John Bond and Mary Bell, Sidnell points out, "transposes the conjunction of Zeus and Leda into the comic mode and domesticates the archetype."[191]

This transposition and domestication is, in general, what happens in Stories of Michael Robartes and his Friends where, Sidnell notes,

> the earlier mysteries of Robartes and Aherne have been reduced to absurdity. The two characters are now a couple of spiritual detectives better informed and a move ahead of the official keepers of the conscience of mankind. The narrative point of the chronicle is Robartes' search for a proper guardian for Leda's third egg. "Aherne and I will dig a shallow hole," says Robartes, "where she must lay it and leave it to be hatched by the sun's heat" [A Vision, 51].[192]

Robartes, assisted however reluctantly by Owen Aherne, abandons the passive role he had in "The Phases of the Moon" to become actively involved in preparing the transformation of the world from primary to antithetical gyre.

Despite the fact that they are working in cooperation, the opposition that Yeats established early between Aherne and Robartes continues in the Stories. Physically, spiritually, and emotionally, they are opposites. Aherne is "stout and sedentary-looking, bearded and dull of eye" (remember the transformed Aherne of the second part of "The Tables of the Law"), whereas Robartes is "lank, brown, muscular, clean-shaven, with an alert, ironical eye" (A Vision, 37).

Clearly the first, as primary man, has no interest in the physical and no eye for beauty, but the second, as antithetical man, definitely has. Aherne remains "A pious Catholic," but Robartes finds little comfort in Christianity: "Jesus Christ does not understand my despair, He belongs to order and reason" (A Vision, 35, 41). Aherne is still the sceptical man of reason who insists on accuracy, on the facts; Robartes, on the other hand, constantly mingles dream and reality, since for him there is truth in both.[193]

Aherne hates much of Robartes' activity, particularly his indulgence in telepathy and vision, which Aherne feels is "Pagan or something of the kind," and yet Aherne remains with Robartes because "he has to do what Robartes tells him, always had to from childhood up" (A Vision, 35). We are reminded by this of the mesmeric powers the narrator of "Rosa Alchemica" attributes to Robartes. Beyond this hypnotic pull, however, lies the attraction between the self and anti-self, which together produce the desired Unity of Being. Robartes and Aherne are drawn together as self and anti-self, and antagonistic as they may be, they remain together because they complement each other. Primary and antithetical round out the Great Wheel.

In Stories of Michael Robartes and his Friends, Robartes retains his interest in the dancer but the significance of his love for the ballet dancer is made more pointed in the Stories than it had been in the earlier Vision:

> I went to Rome and there fell violently in love with a ballet-dancer who had not an idea in her head. All might have been well had I been content to take what came; had I understood that her coldness and cruelty became in the transfiguration of the body an unhuman majesty; that I adored in body what I hated in will; that judgment is a Judith and drives the steel into what has stirred its

> flesh; that those my judgment approves seem to me, owing to an affliction of my moon, insipid. The more I tried to change her character the more did I uncover mutual enmity. A quarrel, the last of many, parted us at Vienna where her troupe was dancing. (A Vision, 37-38; emphasis mine)[194]

Robartes is not a mere meddler; because he is an antithetical man, his nature is essentially a destructive one and he cannot resist the impulse to try to transform and hence to destroy everything around him. We have seen this aspect of his character symbolized in his hawk-like profile. In Stories of Michael Robartes and his Friends, his desires are no longer hidden but expressed openly:

> Dear predatory birds, prepare for war, prepare your children and all that you can reach, for how can a nation or a kindred without war become that "bright particular star" of Shakespeare, that lit the roads in boyhood? Test art, morality, custom, thought, by Thermopylae; make rich and poor act so to one another that they can stand together there. Love war because of its horror, that belief may be changed, civilisation renewed. We desire belief and lack it. Belief comes from shock and is not desired. When a kindred discovers through apparition and horror that the perfect cannot perish nor even the imperfect long be interrupted, who can withstand that kindred? Belief is renewed continually in the ordeal of death. (A Vision, 52-53)[195]

Through the ordeal of death, Robartes hopes to see the world transformed from primary to antithetical, for

> After an age of necessity, truth, goodness, mechanism, science, democracy, abstraction, peace, comes an age of freedom, fiction, evil, kindred, art, aristocracy, particularity, war. (A Vision, 52)

The unpublished typescript, "Michael Robartes Foretells," is important in connection with the transformation Michael Robartes eagerly anticipates. The action (really a misnomer since the piece consists entirely of conversation and notes of conversation), takes place seven years after the close of Stories of Michael Robartes and his Friends. No mention at all is made of Aherne. Robartes has disappeared into Arabia and, perplexed by the "young men fresh from the Universities" in London, feeling that they are perhaps growing old, Hudden, Dudden, Daniel O'Leary and Denice [sic] have gathered at Yeats's Thoor Ballylea [sic] where O'Leary is, he tells us, spending

> a week or two within reach of Coole House that I might look into the empty rooms, walk the woods and grass-grown gardens, where a great Irish social order climaxed and passed away.[196]

This comment indicates the theme for the typescript: "Michael Robartes Foretells" sets out predictions made by the characters (before Robartes' departure) for the social and political order of the future.[197]

As the passage above illustrates, like Yeats himself, O'Leary regretted the passing of the aristocratic tradition and felt that the future would be to its opposite, communism. Duddon believed, however, that communism could not succeed because "the Proletariat was an abstraction," not a reality.[198] According to Duddon, the future was to fascism, the elitism of a new era: "the German and Italian conception of the State moulded by History yet transparent to reason and at last completely intelligible."[199]

In keeping with his belief in the cyclic system, Robartes saw the next age as an antithetical one in which "some Asiatic Nation would base its whole civilisation upon War."[200] This society would return to the structures of the past and establish a hierarchical and paternalistic government in which the ruling class "would take care of the common people as our governing class could not or would not."[201] This ruling class would consist of men "whom, though they seem every man's, even every base man's very self, it is natural to call noble."[202] The philosophy of this civilization would be a combination of Asiatic attitudes and the results of psychic research. Reincarnation would be one of its tenets.

In the second part of the typescript, a direct record of Robartes' prophecies, Robartes rejects Hegelian dialectic and Marxism as derived from it because they posit a progressive movement, rather than the constant transformation of cycles forever alternating with each other. For the immediate future Robartes predicts the conformism of group politics, of fascism and all the other "isms"; "young men marching in step, with the shirts and songs that give our politics an air of sport."[203] This conformism will be followed closely by glorification of mass production lives, in which the common good is exalted over individualism. For the final phases of this, the primary cycle, Robartes foresees moral and spiritual turbulence created by disgusted minorities who will have achieved "knowledge of a form of existence, of a private aim opposite to any our civilisation has pursued . . . the knowledge enforced upon Primary Minds of antithetical civilisation."[204]

For more than forty years, from Aedh's first appearance in the revision of "The Wanderings of Oisin" (1895) until the revised version of A Vision in 1937, Michael Robartes and his assorted friends were intimately linked in Yeats's work with transformation. When we look over the whole range of stories and poems related to these characters we find that they fall into four main periods of concentration.

The first period extends from 1895 to 1899, roughly the time of Yeats's most intense interest in French symbolism. Included in this period are the O'Sullivan the Red poems, the early occult tales, the Hanrahan stories, and the poems in The Wind Among the Reeds. These works introduce us to O'Sullivan, Aedh, Hanrahan, Robartes, Owen Aherne, and "the narrator," and present the characters primarily as images of imagination, art, poetry, and spiritual transformation.

The second group appears just after Yeats's marriage and is the poetic fruit of his first interest in "the system": "Ego Dominus Tuus," "The Double Vision of Michael Robartes," "The Phases of the Moon," "Michael Robartes and the Dancer," and the notes to these works and to Four Plays for Dancers were published between 1917 and 1922. John Aherne first appears in the works of this period, which focus on the basic opposition between primary and antithetical and rather hesitantly, perhaps, offer images of the transformations of the Great Wheel of life as these affect both the individual and world history. The first edition of A Vision (1925), the unpublished manuscript describing its background, and the closely related poem, "The Gift of Harun Al-Rashid," form the third group, which continues to examine the system--in more detail and less tentatively.[205]

The fourth and final period of concentration begins in 1931 and includes Stories of Michael Robartes and his Friends, the unpublished typescript "Michael Robartes Foretells," and "Tom the Lunatic." These are the product of Yeats's reconsideration of the system and his decision to rewrite A Vision. Consequently, although it was not published until five years later, the second edition of A Vision with the revision of the Stories belongs in the fourth group as well. This last period introduces several new characters: Huddon, Duddon, Daniel O'Leary, Denise de L'Isle Adam, John Bond, and Mary Bell. With the new characters comes a new attitude. Yeats adopts an ironic attitude to the images and ideas he has treasured so long. At the same time he suggests just how important they are to his work.

William Irwin Thompson comments on the problem such confident self-mockery creates for many of Yeats's readers:

> to the pious, Yeats's Ribh is a little unsettling; to the political Left, Yeats's wheels, gyres, and aristocratic pose are exasperating. Out of the dilemma of Yeats, two clearly marked exits have been shown by critics. There is the way out of the New Criticism, which has lifted the typical Yeats poem into a sort of middle air where, with all its configurations of meaning and high tensions of paradox and irony, it vibrates harmlessly. The other is the way out of the exponents of irony and ambiguity, as if Yeats's Vision were but a joke. If A Vision is a joke, then all of Yeats's life was, which, of course, it was; but the laughter of Krishna is not the drollery of George Moore. . . . A Vision, with its dramatic theory of history and man, is the full expression of Yeats's thought and life. It is more than an eclectic collection of metaphors to be sprinkled into verse. It is the ultimate mocking affirmation of all that is most antithetical to our age; as such we ignore it at our peril.[206]

As we saw in Chapter Three, such "affirmative mockery"[207] is also characteristic of Villiers's work, particularly L'Eve future, where it poses similar problems for critics. The work of Yeats's last period is not, then, as far removed from Villiers as one might expect from surveying the great changes in style and attitude that Yeats's work underwent after the period in the 1890's when he was so strongly attracted to Villiers.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE PHANTASMAGORIC IMAGINATION

Introduction

In a 1976 article, "The Phantasmagoria of Hugh Selwyn Mauberley," Ian F.A. Bell traces the literary history of the word phantasmagoria until its appearance in Ezra Pound's poem in 1920. Bell draws attention to "The Magic Lantern," "a curious and ironical essay" by James Huneker that records one of the many improvisations to which Villiers de l'Isle-Adam treated his friends and acquaintances.[1] Although, as Bell points out, the word phantasmagoria is not itself used in Villiers's tale, the story "clearly relies on its operational effectiveness."[2]

The word phantasmagoria may not appear in this particular tale as Huneker records it, but the closely related term "magic lantern" certainly does.[3] Moreover, phantasmagoria itself occurs in at least eight other places in Villiers's work, and although Bell states that the Huneker essay contains the "most recent occurrence of the word's reference prior to Hugh Selwyn Mauberley,"[4] he has overlooked several instances of the word's use in the work of an author much more closely associated with Pound: William Butler Yeats. "Phantasmagoria" appears in Yeats's work at least six times prior to the publication of Hugh Selwyn Mauberley.[5] Yeats continues to use the word until as late as 1937: in "A General Introduction for My Work" he explains that "p[illegible]tasmagoria" is "The First Principle" of poetic creation.[6]

Despite what Bell calls the "unusualness" of the word,[7] the use of phantasmagoria in literature in general, and in the works of Villiers and Yeats in particular has attracted relatively little critical attention.[8] The term is an important one that merits closer examination.

Origins and Associations of the Term

With the notable exception of Bell, the few critics who mention phantasmagoria generally ignore both its technical meaning and its association with transformation. The phantasmagoria is to the modern motion picture as alchemy is to chemistry. Its prototype was the two-dimensional spectacle produced by ancient magicians who projected illusions--often "visions" of the gods--by means of metal mirrors.[9] In Movement in Two Dimensions, Olive Cook points out that the magicians

> sought to arouse no emotions but those of astonishment, terror, and awe, and the terror they hoped to inspire was not the cathartic terror of the drama caused by participation in another's suffering, but a nightmarish terror of the unknown. For these first productions, visions summoned up by sorcerer-priests, aimed at presenting phenomena beyond the grasp of the human mind.[10]

In the seventeenth century, the magicians' technology was greatly improved with the invention of the magic lantern, generally attributed to Athanasius Kircher, a scientist and Jesuit priest who, according to Cook "seems to have had much in common with the magician-priests of earlier ages."[11] Cook describes Kircher's magic lantern shows:

> The spectators of Kircher's shows were not placed as they usually were in Victorian times and always are today--on the same side of the screen as the lantern: his screen was between the viewers and the lantern and was made of transparent taffetas. His pictures were painted on long strips of glass, every part of which was made opaque except the figures. By the skilful manipulation of his lantern Kircher could make these

> figures appear at one moment as big as giants, the next as small as dwarfs; they would advance, retire, dissolve into seeming nothingness, and then return in utterly different forms.[12]

Kircher was, then, a sorcerer effecting magic transformations.[13]

We have seen that as the technology became more sophisticated, the early religious role of the automaton, for most people, eventually gave place to its function as entertainment. In a similar fashion, the art of projecting images lost its link with religion and gradually became merely an amusement.[14] This process was essentially complete with the form of public magic lantern entertainment known as the phantasmagoria (from the conjunction of the Greek word for phantasm or apparition, and the Greek word for assembly).[15] The term was invented in 1802 by a M. Philipstal who produced extremely popular exhibitions in London and Edinburgh.[16] Philipstal, Cook tells us, was "a mysterious character reported to have dabbled in alchemy after having been trained as a doctor."[17]

The eleventh edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica describes the operation of the phantasmagoria:

> The lantern is mounted on wheels so that it can be rapidly moved up to or withdrawn from the screen; and an automatic arrangement is provided whereby simultaneously with this the objective is made to approach or recede from the slide so as to focus the picture on the screen in any position of the lantern. In this way a very small picture appears gradually to grow to enormous dimensions.[18]

One particular type of slide used in the magic lantern shows and phantasmagoria is of special interest here: photographic slides made from life models and coloured. Cook writes that

> as images they surpass all other varieties of slides, for they create a new mode of vision. The imaginative use of photography conspired with painting and the magic of projection to produce an impact of which academic painting was no longer capable by the end of the last century, and which the factual photograph, with all its power of transfixing momentary, casual effects, could never achieve.
>
> These remarkable slides immediately preceded the cinema as a form of popular entertainment, and employed many of the devices which we are inclined to regard as peculiar to film, particularly the flash-back and the convincing presentation of the fantastic.[19]

When life models were combined with background photographs of actual scenes, Cook notes, "curious errors in perspective" often resulted which produced strange surrealistic effects.[20] The use of photography and living models for narrative slides "endowed the projected image with a more vivid human interest . . . and a wider emotional range than it had so far been able to command."[21]

In his account of the phantasmagoria, Bell emphasizes the startling and vivid visual effects and the "special sense of the visual image in a state of action."[22] From the technical meaning of phantasmagoria comes an important extension of the word "to any rapidly or strikingly changing scene, and especially to a disordered or fantastic scene or picture of the imagination."[23] This meaning of phantasmagoria is particularly significant in connection with its use in literature.

From his study of the literary history of phantasmagoria, Bell concludes that the term is associated with horror, deception, and nightmare.[24] "The technical reference of the word . . . invariably informs its usage," he writes, and consequently, phantasmagoria "occurs as a defining term for the crisis-point of the interaction between the private imagination and a public actuality."[25] Bell finds phantasmagoria associated also with danger, particularly the danger of entrapment or suspension between two conflicting worlds.[26] Because "the original meaning of the word to describe a particularly vivid and realistically effective medium for visual illusion" underlies its literary use, "'phantasmagoria' has vitality, . . . potency."[27]

In the works of Villiers and Yeats, phantasmagoria involves the associations Bell discusses, but is not limited to them. The interest Villiers and Yeats take in the occult is important in this context, for much in occult thought is expressed in terms that suggest phantasmagoria.

Without seeming to realize it, Bell provides a clue to this aspect of occult thought when he comments parenthetically that "Early in *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* we are told ironically, 'All things are a flowing,/ Sage Heraclitus says.'"[28] In the "Anima Vagula" chapter of *Marius the Epicurean* Walter Pater summarizes the thought of Heraclitus:

> *Men are subject to an illusion*, [Heraclitus] protests, regarding matters apparent to sense. What the uncorrected sense gives was *a false impression of permanence* or fixity in things, which have really changed their nature in the very moment in which we see and touch them. And the radical flaw in the current mode of thinking would lie herein: that, reflecting this false or uncorrected sensation, it attributes to the phenomena of experience a durability which does not really belong to them. *Imaging forth* from those fluid impressions a world of firmly outlined objects, it leads one to regard as a thing stark and dead what is in reality full of animation, of vigour, of the fire of life--that *eternal process* of nature, of which at a later time Goethe spoke as the "Living Garment," whereby God is seen of us, ever weaving at the "Loom of Time."
>
> . . . *The one true being*--that constant subject of all early thought--it was [Heraclitus's] merit to have conceived, *not as sterile and stagnant inaction, but as a perpetual energy*, from the restless stream of which, at certain points, some elements detach themselves, and harden into non-entity and death, corresponding, as outward objects, to man's inward condition of ignorance:

> that is, to the slowness of his faculties. It is with this paradox of a subtle, perpetual change in all visible things, that the high speculation of Heraclitus begins. . . .
>
> The negative doctrine, then, that the objects of our ordinary experience, fixed as they seem, are really in perpetual change, had been as originally conceived but the preliminary step towards a large positive system of almost religious philosophy. Then as now, the illuminated philosophic mind might apprehend, in what seemed a mass of lifeless matter, the movement of that universal life, in which things, and men's impressions of them, were ever "coming to be," alternately consumed and renewed. That continual change, to be discovered by the attentive understanding where common opinion found fixed objects, was but the indicator of a subtler but all-pervading motion--the sleepless, ever-sustained, inexhaustible energy of the divine reason itself, proceeding always by its own rhythmical logic, and lending to all mind and matter in turn what life they had. In this "perpetual flux" of things and of souls, there was, as Heraclitus conceived, a continuance, if not of their material or spiritual elements, yet of orderly intelligible relationships, like the harmony of musical notes, wrought out in and through the series of their mutations--ordinances of the divine reason, maintained throughout the changes of the phenomenal world; and this harmony in their mutation and opposition, was after all a principle of sanity, of reality, there.[29]

Three descriptions of occult thought are particularly interesting in association with phantasmagoria. The first is from Eliphas Lévi. Part III, Chapter IV of *La Clef des grands mystères* is entitled "Les Fantômes fluidiques et leurs mystères." It begins:

> Les anciens leur [les fantômes fluidiques] donnaient différents noms. C'étaient les larves, les lémures, les empuses. Ils aimaient la vapeur du sang répandu, et fuyaient le tranchant du glaive.
>
> La théurgie les évoquait, et la kabbale les connaissait sous le nom d'esprits élémentaires.
>
> Ce n'étaient pourtant pas des esprits, car ils étaient mortels.
>
> C'étaient des coagulations fluidiques qu'on pouvait détruire en les divisant.
>
> C'étaient des espèces de mirages animés, des émanations imparfaites de la vie humaine: les traditions de la magie noire les font naître du célibat d'Adam. Paracelse dit que les vapeurs du sang des femmes hystériques peuplent l'air de fantômes; et ces idées sont si anciennes,

> que nous en retrouvons la trace dans Hésiode, qui défend expressément de faire sécher devant le feu les linges tachés par une pollution quelconque.
>
> Les personnes obsédées par les fantômes sont ordinairement exaltées par un célibat trop rigoureux, ou affaiblis par des excès de débauche.
>
> Les fantômes fluidiques sont les avortons de la lumière vitale; ce sont des médiateurs plastiques sans corps et sans esprit, nés des excès de l'esprit et des dérèglements du corps. . . .
>
> La photographie nous prouve assez que les images sont des modifications réelles de la lumière. Or, il existe une photographie accidentelle et fortuite qui opère, d'après les mirages errants dans l'atmosphère, des impressions durables sur des feuilles d'arbres, dans le bois et jusque dans le coeur des pierres: ainsi se forment ces figures naturelles auxquelles Gaffarel a consacré plusieurs pages dans son livre des Curiosités inouïes, ces pierres auxquelles il attribue une vertu occulte, et qu'il nomme des gamahés; ainsi se tracent ces écritures et ces dessins qui étonnent à un si haut point les observateurs des phénomènes fluidiques. Ce sont des photographies astrales tracées par l'imagination des médium avec le concours ou sans le concours des larves fluidiques.[30]

In his chapter on Pythagoreanism and the Delphic mysteries in Les Grands Initiés, Edouard Schuré writes of the "Triade ou loi du ternaire" which, according to Pythagoras, is the key to life:

> elle se retrouve à tous les degrés de l'échelle de la vie, depuis la constitution de la cellule organique, à travers la constitution physiologique du corps animal, le fonctionnement du système sanguin et du système cérébro-spinal, jusqu'à la constitution hyperphysique de l'homme, à celle de l'univers et de Dieu. Ainsi elle ouvre comme par enchantement à l'esprit émerveillé la structure interne de l'univers; elle montre les correspondances infinies du macrocosme et du microcosme. Elle agit comme une lumière qui passerait dans les choses pour les rendre transparentes, et fait reluire les mondes petits et grands comme autant de lanternes magiques.[31]

The "Microcosm Lecture" of the Order of the Golden Dawn includes the following passage:

> Thou shalt know that the whole Sphere of Sensation which surroundeth the whole physical body of a man is called "The Magical Mirror of the Universe." For therein are

> represented all the occult forces of the Universe projected as on a sphere, convex to the outer, but concave to man. This sphere surroundeth the physical body of a man as the Celestial Heavens do the body of a Star or a Planet, having their forces mirrored in its atmosphere. Therefore its allotment or organization is the copy of that Greater World or Macrocosm. In the "Magical Mirror of the Universe," therefore, are the Ten Sephiroth projected in the form of the Tree of Life as in a solid sphere.[32]

Phantasmagoria in the Works of Villiers and Yeats

The earliest instance of the word phantasmagoria that I have found in Villiers's work occurs in the Claire Lenoir section of Tribulat Bonhomet, originally published in 1867. Césaire Lenoir speaks of the power of the imagination and of what Yeats terms "the independent reality of our thoughts":[33]

> Si l'on savait . . . jusqu'à quel point la force vive de l'Idée est surprenante et terrible dans les sphères de la Foi! La puissance d'une imagination, d'un rêve, d'une vision, dépasse quelquefois les lois de la vie. La Peur, par exemple, l'idée seule de la Peur superstitieuse, sans motif extérieur, peut foudroyer un homme comme une pile électrique. Les choses vues par un visionnaire sont, au fond, matérielles pour lui à un degré aussi positif, tenez, --que le Soleil lui-même, cette lampe mystérieuse de tout ce système fantasmagorique de création, de disparition, de transformation![34]

Later in the story, Villiers provides a grisly verification of Lenoir's ideas. As I have mentioned before, Tribulat discovers that Lenoir's obsession with violence and cannibalism has transformed him, after death, into an "Ottysor-vampire." In this form Lenoir avenges his wife's adultery by murdering her former lover. Tribulat learns of this occurrence in a significant manner. Using his ophthalmoscope, he examines the retina of Lenoir's dead wife in order to view the vision of the murder fixed there by her death.

In effect, Tribulat turns Claire's eyes into a camera obscura or a peepshow. Tribulat's difficulties with his examination illustrate the technical problems involved with these early forms of moving pictures which created their effects by using convex lenses and reflecting mirrors. Tribulat explains that if he looks into Claire's eyes when her corpse is upright, "Ce qui pouvait être demeuré en ces yeux allait m'apparaître en sens inverse, retourné de bas en haut, la cavité située derrière l'iris formant chambre noire."[35] Tribulat solves his problem by letting Claire's head hang over the edge of the bed so that the image on her retina will be right side up.

This first instance of Villiers's use of phantasmagoria, then, exhibits several of the characteristics that Bell demonstrates are associated with the term in literature: horror, nightmare, danger and entrapment or suspension, and occurrence at a crisis-point of interaction between two worlds. In addition, Villiers associates the phantasmagoria with the occult, and uses it to establish not only the illusory quality of the "real" world, but also, paradoxically, the reality of the world of vision and imagination.

Twenty years after using the term in Claire Lenoir, Villiers added another reference to phantasmagoria to his Tribulat Bonhomet material. In "Motion du Dr. Tribulat Bonhomet touchant l'utilisation des tremblements de terre," Tribulat proposes a means of ridding the world of artists, those recalcitrant enemies of his beloved "Progrès." He recommends that all artists be gathered together in the place most likely to be subject to earthquake. Here they should be housed in "d'énormes bâtiments à toiture de granit":

> Bref, nous leur offririons un logis confortable, brillant même, avec des horizons, des couchers du Soleil, des horizontales, des étoiles, des falaises, des myrtes, des vins fins, des romans, des fleurs, des oiseaux, enfin l'entourage où ces messieurs perçoivent toutes leurs insipides fantasmagories. Et, puisqu'ils s'obstinent, malgré l'évidence, à croire encore au Mystérieux, qu'ils soient ainsi livrés au Mystérieux![36]

Derogatory as Tribulat may intend this use of phantasmagoria to be, given the source the significance is reversed. The result is a positive statement of the role of the artist and the "illusions" he creates.

Villiers achieves a similar effect with the use of phantasmagoria in Axël. Kaspar is contemplating what he considers to be the folly of Axël's involvement with alchemy and the occult:

> Comme si toutes les fantasmagories de la terre et toutes les sentences des philosophes valaient, en réalité, le regard d'une jolie femme! --Et la jeunesse, hélas! la belle jeunesse! --Voilà la vraie magie! (Axël, 91)

Kaspar urges Axël to abandon his occult studies: "Laisse ici les chimères! Marche sur la terre, comme il sied à un homme" (Axël, 129). It is clear from the context that it is not alchemy that is phantasmagoric, a chimera, but the world of the profane represented by the court that Kaspar "sees" in a phantasmagoric vision just moments before he speaks of the "illusions" of the Great Work (see Axël, 90). Kaspar's world, the world of the senses, is, in Janus's words, the world of "mirages" (Axël, 200), and thus "son Apparaître, quel qu'il puisse être, n'est, en principe, que fictif, mobile, illusoire, insaisissable" (Axël, 206). Paradoxically, the world of imagination, of the "succession de mirages" that Sara sees "entre ses paupières à demi fermées" (Axël, 251) possesses a reality of which the things of "La Terre" are just "de pâles reflets" (Axël, 261).

In 1883 Villiers published two stories in which the word phantasmagoria occurs: "Duke of Portland" in Contes cruels and "Le Tzar et les Grands-Ducs," reprinted in L'Amour suprême in 1886. In "Duke of Portland" Villiers maintains the association of phantasmagoria with horror, nightmare, and a crisis-point between two worlds. The young Duke has mysteriously withdrawn from society to reside in his castle keep and become the "lord invisible."[37] Although he never attends himself, he holds parties at his castle--parties of which the "sombre excentricité touchait au fantastique."[38] They are held at night, not in the main suites of the castle, but in its subterranean vaults, which have been decorated in a marvellous fashion. The Duke is represented by one of his friends and by the presence of a singular piece of furniture: "Seul, à la place d'honneur du festin, le fauteuil du jeune lord restait vide et l'écusson ducal qui en surmontait le dossier demeurait toujours voilé d'un long crêpe de deuil."[39]

Against the surrealistic background of these strange subterranean parties, Villiers projects his phantasmagoria: often, at midnight, with the sounds of the revelries muffled underground,

> un gentleman, enveloppé d'un manteau, le visage recouvert d'un masque d'étoffe noire auquel était adaptée une capuce circulaire qui cachait toute la tête, s'acheminait, la lueur d'un cigare à la main longuement gantée, vers la plage. Comme par une fantasmagorie d'un goût suranné, deux serviteurs aux cheveux blancs le précédaient; deux autres le suivaient, à quelques pas, élevant de fumeuses torches rouges.
>
> Au-devant d'eux marchait un enfant, aussi en livrée de deuil, et ce page agitait, une fois par minute, le court battement d'une cloche pour avertir au loin que l'on s'écartât le passage du promeneur. Et l'aspect de cette petite troupe laissait une impression aussi glaçante que le cortège d'un condamné.[40]

The impression is accurate--for the Duke of Portland, as "le dernier dépositaire de la grande lèpre antique,"[41] is literally the walking figure of Death-in-Life. When he dies, his fiancée, assuming his role, retires from the world and takes the veil.

In "Le Tzar et les Grands-Ducs" phantasmagoria is associated with a strange blending of art and reality as the two worlds meet at twilight. Villiers describes an open-air production of part of Wagner's Tannhäuser presented in the very spot in which the opera is set: the Venusberg near the castle of Wartburg in Thuringia:

> Le jour baissait sur les collines, derrière le rideau de verdure des frênes et des sapins, au feuillage maintenant d'or rouge. Les premières étoiles brillaient sur la vallée dans le haut azur du soir. Soudain, le silence se fit. --Au loin, un choeur de huit cents voix, d'abord invisible, commençait le Chant des Pèlerins, du Tannhaeuser. Bientôt les chanteurs, vêtus de longues robes brunes et appuyés sur leurs bâtons de pèlerinage, apparurent, gravissant les hauteurs du Vénusberg, en face de nous. Leur formes se détachaient sur le crépuscule. --Où d'aussi surprenantes fantasmagories sont-elles réalisables, sinon dans ces contrées, tout artistiques, de l'Allemagne?... Lorsque, après le puissant forte final, le choeur se tut, une voix, une seule voix! --celle de Betz ou de Scaria sans doute, --s'éleva, distincte, détaillant magnifiquement l'invocation de Wolfram d'Eschenbach à l'Etoile-du-Soir.
>
> Le minnesinger était debout au sommet du Vénusberg, seul, vision du passé, au-dessus du silence de cette foule. La réalité avait l'air d'un rêve.[42]

In "Les Expériences du Dr. Crookes," originally published in Le Figaro (19 mai, 1884) and reprinted in L'Amour suprême, Villiers outlines some of the research of William Crookes into such psychic and spiritualistic phenomena as the ability of psychic mediums to produce apparitions of strange forms, luminous hands, etc.[43] Crookes concludes that the apparitions are produced by "une nouvelle force liée à l'organisme humain et que l'on peut appeler Force psychique."[44] To a greater or lesser degree, Crookes says, everyone has this psychic force, which Villiers terms "cette force projective de soi-même."[45] Villiers asks what the Christian is to think of "ces fantasmagories inquiétantes-- . . . cette... divinité pour tous?"[46] Perhaps a little tongue-in-cheek, he concludes in this case that the Christian should ignore the phenomena and not get involved with "L'Art d'évoquer les morts en vingt-cinq leçons."[47]

Villiers does not, however, deny the reality of the unsettling apparitions, nor the ability of certain individuals to evoke the dead or other spirits. We will look more closely at the manner in which Villiers portrays the evocation of the dead when we examine Yeats's essay on "Swedenborg, Mediums, and the Desolate Places" and the incomplete work by Villiers known as "L'Ombre de Meyerbeer."

We have already seen how central the spirit world is to L'Eve future, but in the present context we should look at it again briefly, for the novel contains one of the most important instances of Villiers's use of phantasmagoria. Villiers's interest in photography and related technology is evident throughout L'Eve future, from Edison's whimsical speculations in the opening pages--particularly in the chapter on "Photographies de l'histoire du monde" (L'Eve, 43),[48] to the moving pictures of Evelyn that Edison shows to Ewald,[49] and the reference in the third last chapter to the very special application of photographic realism that produced Edison's android:

> Moi, le micromètre en main et ma plus forte loupe sous la paupière, je ne ciselais qu'au degré correspondant à leur instantanée photographie, sur les aspérités du

> cylindre-moteur de l'Andréide, les seuls ensembles parfaits des mouvements, unis aux regards ainsi qu'aux expressions radieuses ou graves d'Alicia. (L'Eve, 416)

Hadaly is a "fantasmagorie métaphysique et cependant vêtue de réalité" (L'Eve, 245). Paradoxically, her physical reality is a phantasmagoric projection, for Hadaly is an artificial construct, a "mirage" (L'Eve, 348) of Alicia Clary created by "photosculpture" (L'Eve, 294). Moreover, what appears to be the illusion of animation in Hadaly turns out to be the true reality. Edison recognizes that "tout n'est point chimérique en cette créature!" (L'Eve, 410).

Behind the apparent illusion of Hadaly stands the reality of an occult spirit world that under certain circumstances reveals itself to mortals by a form of phantasmagoric projection. Although the word phantasmagoria does not occur there, the chapter in L'Eve future entitled "Figures dans la nuit" (L'Eve, 375-78) is devoted to such projections. It is significant that the "inquiétantes visions" (L'Eve, 375) that appear to the elect in moments between waking and sleeping are not merely random manifestations of sundry spirits but, more particularly, projections of beings in a special relationship with the individual who experiences them. As in Yeats's A Vision the phantasmagoria is associated with reincarnation:

> tout homme en qui fermente, dès ici, le germe d'une ultérieure élection et qui sent bien, déjà, ses actes et ses arrière-pensées tramer la chair et la forme futures de sa renaissance, ou, si tu préfères, de sa continuité, cet homme a conscience, en cet autour de lui, tout d'abord de la réalité d'un autre espace inexprimable et dont l'espace apparent, où nous sommes enfermés, n'est que la figure.
>
> Ce vivant éther est une illimitée et libre région où, pour peu qu'il s'attarde, le voyageur privilégié sent comme se projecter sur l'intime de son être temporel, l'ombre anticipée et avant-courrière de l'être qu'il devient. (L'Eve, 376-77)

As we have already seen, it is the imagination that connects the two worlds. When "à la faveur de cette substance infinie, l'Imaginaire," the spirits of the crucible venture into the mortal world, "ils réfléchissent leur présence . . . sur une âme disposée à leur visitation" (L'Eve, 377, 378; emphasis mine). The spirits "s'efforcent de transparaître, autant que possible, pour l'avertir et augmenter sa foi," but the usual reaction of the individual is to dismiss the phantasmagoric projections as simply "des choses du sommeil! des hallucinations!" (L'Eve, 378, 380). The dismissal marks the "illusoire triomphe du moment" of common sense, and the consequence, Hadaly tells Ewald, is entrapment in

> le filet de rétiaire dont elle [ta Raison] t'enveloppe pour paralyser ton essor lumineux. . . . Ainsi, te rendormant, tu as dissipé, en effet, autour de toi, les précieuses présences évoquées, les parentés futures, inévitables, reconnues! Tu as banni d'autour de toi les solennelles et réflexes objectivités de ton Imaginaire! tu as révoqué en doute ton Infini sacré. (L'Eve, 380)

Before turning to the works of Yeats I would like to mention just two further instances in which Villiers uses phantasmagoria. The first is found in "Les Phantasmes de M. Redoux," originally published in 1886 and reprinted in Histoires insolites. In this story phantasmagoria is associated with terror, the imagination, and a crisis-point of interaction between imagination and reality. M. Redoux,

> digne chef de famille, véritable exemple social, n'échappait cependant pas plus que d'autres, lorsqu'il était seul et s'absorbait en soi-même, à la hantise de certains phantasmes qui, parfois, surgissent dans les cervelles des plus pondérés industriels.[50]

Once while at the wax museum in London, surrounded by the "fantasmagorique entourage" of the wax figures, "ces passants trompe-l'oeil,"

M. Redoux is seized with the urge to experience in his imagination the "sensations terribles" that Louis XVI must have felt just before his death on the guillotine.[51] He decides to remain after the museum closes and place his own head on the museum's guillotine. By posing as one of the phantasmagoric wax figures, and aided by the cover of twilight, Redoux escapes the notice of the museum attendants:

> M. Redoux prit, subitement, une pose immobile; son geste offrait une prise; son chapeau, de bords larges, ses mains rougeaudes, sa figure enluminée, ses yeux mi-clos et fixes, les plis de sa longue redingote, toute sa personne roidie, ne respirant plus, sembla, elle aussi, et à s'y méprendre, celle d'un faux-passant.[52]

Redoux carries out his plan, but the imaginary experience becomes somewhat too vivid when it is complicated by the impingements of reality: he becomes trapped with his head in the guillotine. Terror at the thought of a real, rather than imaginary death, turns Redoux's hair and beard white and he ages years in the space of a night.

We find much the same association of phantasmagoria with terror and the interactions of reality and illusion in the improvisation reported by Huneker and de Gourmont. In this tale, Villiers anticipates the effects now being created by holograms. The story is set in the desert and concerns the efforts of a small band of Arabs to withstand the assault of a large force of English soldiers. While his men, safely hidden behind giant sand dunes, acted out a pantomime of battle, the Arab leader, El-Ferenghy, who "understood the mechanism of the mirage" demoralized the English by using a round steel mirror, "his magic lantern," to throw "a mirage of his band upon the sands, making a false picture, which the English mistook for reality."[53] The terror-stricken English wasted their energy fighting the mirage until finally the Arabs fell upon them and "slew them to a man."[54]

Villiers concludes his tale by observing that the motto of El-Ferenghy's band "was that of the Ancient of Assassinations: 'All is permitted. Nothing is true.'" The motto might stand as the epigraph for the tale, which is told in the first person by Villiers, who presents himself as having been an ally of the Arabs and a participant in their magic lantern pantomime. Villiers thus includes himself quite literally in the phantasmagoria.[55]

The earliest use of the word phantasmagoria that I have discovered in Yeats's work occurs in his letter to the editor of The Bookman on the subject of the laureateship. The letter was published in November 1892. Yeats pleads that "it is time to transform the Laureateship" from a court appointment to a national appointment that requires the Poet Laureate to celebrate "matters of national importance," rather than royal marriages.[56] Yeats argues that times have changed and so, therefore, should the Laureateship:

> In the old days the imagination of the world would have fared but ill without its kings and nobles, for in those times, when few could read and pictures were many a mile between, they kept before men's minds a more refined and ample ideal of life than was possible to the small chief in his rush-strewn tower or to the carle in his poor cottage. By a phantasmagoria of royalties and nobilities the soul of the world displayed itself, and whatever there was in the matter of court poet or court pageantry helped it to draw them away from their narrow circle of eating and sleeping, and getting and begetting. It showed them life under the best conditions, and king or queen, baron or duke, became to them a type of the glory of the world. Thus at any rate do I, with my perhaps too literary eyes, read history, and turn all into a kind of theatre where the proud walk clad in cloth of gold, and display their passionate hearts, that the groundlings may feel their

> souls wax the greater. But now no man can say that life displays itself under the best conditions in royalties and nobilities, for refinement and ample life have gone out into the highways and byways, and the Laureate should go after them, and be their master of the revels.[57]

This initial association of phantasmagoria both with the "soul of the world" and with poetry continues throughout Yeats's work, as does the relationship of phantasmagoria with theatre and drama.

The early versions of The Celtic Twilight contain a reference to phantasmagoria which Yeats revised out of the text included in Mythologies.[58] In the early editions, "A Visionary" closes with the following paragraph:

> This old man always rises before me when I think of X-----. Both seek--one in wandering sentences, the other in symbolic pictures and subtle allegoric poetry--to express a something that lies beyond the range of expression: and both, if X----- will forgive me, have within them the vast and vague extravagance that lies at the bottom of the Celtic heart. The peasant visionaries that are, the landlord duelists that were, and the whole hurly-burly of legends--Cuchulain fighting the sea for two days until the waves pass over him and he dies, Caolte storming the palace of the gods, Oisin seeking in vain for three hundred years to appease his insatiable heart with all the pleasures of faeryland, these two mystics walking up and down upon the mountains uttering the central dreams of their souls in no less dream-laden sentences, and this mind that finds them so interesting--all are a portion of that great Celtic phantasmagoria whose meaning no man has discovered, nor any angel revealed.[59]

The full meaning of the Celtic phantasmagoria may not have been revealed, but Yeats's work taken as a whole goes a long way towards suggesting its significance. Important clues are contained right within this passage, and in a sentence in the previous paragraph, which was also removed in revision. Yeats describes "X-----" and the old man who is linked with him in Yeats's thoughts: "Both how Celtic! how full of striving after a something never to be completely expressed in word or deed."[60] The great Celtic phantasmagoria is linked, then, with fiction and the past, with reality and the present, with intense emotion and dynamic action, with recurrence and mystic vision, with ineffable truth and the eternal attempt to express its mystery. Even the poet, "this mind" that finds the whole hurly-burly so interesting, is part of the phantasmagoria, just as Villiers is in the improvisation Huneker records.

On December 13, 1908, Yeats made an entry in his private journal that linked phantasmagoria with his theory of the mask, and, for the first time, with Michael Robartes and his friends. He muses rather enigmatically:

> I now see what is wrong with "Tables of the Law". The hero must not seem for a moment a shadow of the hero of "Rosa Alchemica". He is not the mask but the face. He realizes himself. He cannot obtain vision in the ordinary sense. He is himself the centre. Perhaps he dreams he is speaking. He is not spoken to. He puts himself in place of Christ. He is not the revolt of multitude. What did the woman in Paris reveal to the Magi? Surely some reconciliation between face and mask? Does the narrator refuse this manuscript, and so never learn its contents? Is it simply the doctrine of the Mask? The choosing of some one mask? Hardly, for that would but be the imitation of Christ in a new form. Is it becoming mask after mask? Perhaps the name only should be given, "Mask and Face". Yet the nature of the man seems to prepare for a continual change, a phantasmagoria. One day one god and the next another.
>
> The imitation of Christ as distinguished from the self-realization of the "Tables of the Law". What of it? Christ is but another self, but he is the supernatural self.[61]

The theory of A Vision is taking shape.

"Swedenborg, Mediums, and the Desolate Places," dated 1914 but originally published in 1920 in Lady Gregory's Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland, examines material particularly relevant to the portion of A Vision devoted to "The Soul in Judgment." We have seen that the phantasmagoria plays an important role in this particular section of A Vision where it represents both a state in the purification of the soul, whether on its path to reincarnation or to transcendence, and a stage in the creative process that transforms life into art.[62]

In his article on Swedenborg, Yeats is concerned with the world of spirit and its interaction with this terrestrial world. The section on mediumship is of special importance in the present context. Indeed, as Kathleen Raine points out, the "materialization phenomena" that Yeats dwells on here are "crucial to his magical theory of the imagination."[63]

Yeats explains what occurs when a medium evokes spirits. It was "an American shoemaker's clerk called Jackson Davies," Yeats writes, "who first adapted to the séance-room the philosophy of Swedenborg":

> Davies, in his literal way, said the first sixty feet of the atmosphere was a reflector and that in almost every case it was mere images we spoke with in the séance-room, the spirit itself being far away. The images are made of a substance drawn from the medium, who loses weight, and in a less degree from all present, and for this light must be extinguished or dimmed or shaded with red as in a photographer's room. The image will begin outside the medium's body as a luminous cloud, or in a sort of luminous mud forced from the body, out of the mouth it may be, from the side or from the lower parts of the body. One may see a vague cloud condense and diminish into a head or arm or a whole figure of a man, or to some animal shape.[64]

The spirits draw on the mortal world and the human imagination for the image they project:

> Sometimes, indeed, there is a strange regularity of feature and we suspect the presence of an image that may never have lived, an artificial beauty that may have shown itself in the Greek mysteries. Has some cast in the Vatican or at Bloomsbury been the model?[65]

Artificial and imaginary as the spirit images may at times appear, however, they possess a very special reality capable of impinging on the human world:

> All may seem histrionic or a hollow show. We are the spectators of a phantasmagoria that affects the photographic plate or leaves its moulded image in a preparation of paraffin. We have come to understand why the Platonists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and visionaries, like Boehme and Paracelsus confused imagination with magic, and why Boehme will have it that it "creates and substantiates as it goes".[66]

"Here and there" amongst the spirit images

> one discovers a wise and benevolent mind that knows a little of the future and can give good advice. They have made, one imagines, from some finer substance than a phosphorescent mud, or cobweb vapour that we can see or handle, images not wholly different from themselves, figures in a galanty show not too strained or too extravagant to speak their very thought.
>
> Yet we never long escape the phantasmagoria nor can long forget that we are among the shape-changers. Sometimes our own minds shape that mysterious substance, which may be life itself, according to desire or constrained by memory, and the dead no longer remembering their own names become the characters in the drama we ourselves have invented.[67]

There are striking similarities between Yeats's "Swedenborg, Mediums, and the Desolate Places" and the unfinished tale by Villiers, which E. Drougard entitles "L'Ombre de Meyerbeer." Drougard tentatively dates this tale to about the same era as "Les Expériences du Dr. Crookes."[68] In "L'Ombre de Meyerbeer" Villiers writes of a doctor who "pourrait ouvrir une école de pythonisses où l'on apprendrait l'art d'évoquer les morts en vingt-cinq leçons."[69] The doctor admits that the imagination of both the witnesses to his experiment in evocation and the medium may contribute to the production of the spirit vision, but he insists there is much more to the evocation of the dead than mass hallucination or play acting. "Je suis persuadé," the doctor tells his audience, "qu'il entre au moins huit dixièmes de pure comédie dans ceci. Maintenant, c'est sur les deux autres dixièmes que j'appelle toute votre attention."[70]

Two women subjected to hypnosis--an older "sorcière" and a younger "sibylle"--succeed in evoking "l'ombre" of the dead composer, Meyerbeer. Although Villiers does not actually use the term phantasmagoria in this tale, he has the phantasmagoria in mind. While in a trance, the sorceress relives the death agony of Meyerbeer:

> Cette femme, par l'incantation de cette agonie, vient, peu à peu, de s'identifier grâce à l'état magnétique où elle est plongée, avec, non pas le grand musicien dont on a demandé l'évocation, mais ce que l'on appelle, en thaumaturgie, le corps sidéral de cet homme. Ce corps sidéral, dont le corps physique n'est que pour ainsi dire le repoussé et sur lequel se superposent de changeants atomes extérieurs, n'est pas plus éteint par la mort qu'allumé par la vie; il s'agrège, il passe cette double évolution de l'existence, faite de vie et de mort comme l'espace d'hier et de demain constituent l'aujourd'hui. L'éternité, c'est l'aujourd'hui perpétuel, immobilisé dans l'unité d'hier et de demain.
>
> "En acceptant de subir l'agonie de Meyerbeer, elle a appelé vers elle l'ombre de cet homme. En subissant cette agonie, --elle s'est, à chaque souffrance, pénétrée de plus en plus de cette ombre, du fantôme qui les a subies--et, selon l'intensité avec laquelle elle a su les éprouver, elle a augmenté en elle la présence de l'évoqué, jusqu'à conserver une vision suffisante, qu'elle peut, comme une sorte de halo lumineux, projeter en dehors d'elle-même. C'est la morte imaginaire. . . ."[71]

Being "Fictivement morte" the sorceress is unable to project the phantom of Meyerbeer. The vision is not lost, however, because at the moment when the old woman is on the verge of her imaginary death, the young sibyl who is also in an hypnotic trance, touches the sorceress's lips with a small metal trident and "la force projective de la vision de Meyerbeer" is transferred to the younger woman: "Elle a pris en elle" the doctor explains, "les exactes souffrances qui ont gardé l'empreinte de Meyerbeer mourant. C'est une photographie dont le mort lui-même ne me semble pas tout à fait absent."[72] Others are able to view this "photographie" by establishing physical contact with the sibyl. The narrator observes:

> Une ombre de visage, une buée, diaphanéisée par la lueur même, sembla se dégager du visage de Mme L.., --A peine si cette forme était distincte, mais--elle s'efforçait.
>
> Fort pâle, elle transsudait ce rayonnement pâle, indistinct, et qui s'efforçait de se condenser en une sorte de buée diaphane: on eût dit le masque d'un visage humain se superposant, par un effet d'optique--de reflet d'une vitre lumineuse, par exemple--sur la tête même de M. X... [Mme. L.?], --comme si un invisible microscope solaire eût projeté une photographie grandeur nature, très, très effacée, sur ce visage.[73]

Yeats would certainly have been fascinated with Villiers's association of spirit evocation with theatre, phantasmagoric projection, photography, and the mask.

Per Amica Silentia Lunae (1917) is central to an understanding of the Yeatsian phantasmagoria.[74] Although the term itself does not occur, the play of light and shadow, of projected images, runs throughout the work, from the silent moonlight of the title to the lamp of Solomon in the Epilogue.[75] This lamp is "la vieille lampe isaïque" of Axël that casts such "étranges lueurs," evokes "des mondes de songes," and introduces Janus's discussion of "La Lumière-incréée"

(Axël, 195, 196). The lamp of the epilogue is also an echo of the one that in "Ego Dominus Tuus," the "extended motto" of Per Amica Silentia Lunae,[76] "burns on beside the open book/That Michael Robartes left."[77] As Harold Bloom points out, "Ego Dominus Tuus . . . a poem on the image of desire or Mask," is "the starting point for Anima Hominis even as the essay, Swedenborg, Mediums, and the Desolate Places is the starting point of Anima Mundi."[78] In "Anima Hominis" Yeats writes of the role of the anti-self or Daimon in bringing the individual to fulfilment, and the poet to expression. "Active virtue, as distinguished from the passive acceptance of a code, is . . . theatrical, consciously dramatic, the wearing of a mask."[79] And the mask is a projection of the Daimon.

"The other self, the anti-self or the antithetical self," Yeats explains, "comes but to those who are no longer deceived, whose passion is reality."[80] "Anima Mundi" discusses that reality in its three manifestations: the terrestrial, the condition of air, and the condition of fire. My examination of A Vision and "Swedenborg, Mediums, and the Desolate Places" has shown that the phantasmagoria is associated with the interrelationship between the terrestrial condition and the condition of air,

> the place of shades who are "in the whirl of those
> who are fading," and who cry like those amorous shades
> in the Japanese play:--
> That we may acquire power
> Even in our faint substance,
> We will show forth even now,
> And though it be but in a dream,
> Our form of repentance.[81]

The soul participates in the phantasmagoria as it passes from the terrestrial to the condition of fire via the purgatorial condition of air. Once purified, the soul achieves Unity of Being, it

> puts on the rhythmic or spiritual body or luminous body and contemplates all the events of its memory and every possible impulse in an eternal possession of itself in one single moment. That condition is alone animate, all the rest is fantasy, and from thence come all the passions and, some have held, the very heat of the body.[82]

Clearly, Yeats regards the terrestrial condition as a phantasmagoric projection of the condition of fire. He does not, however, limit the phantasmagoric projection to this terrestrial world. In the note quoted earlier, which was added to Per Amica Silentia Lunae in 1924, Yeats explains:

> When writing this essay I did not see how complete must be the antithesis between man and Daimon. The repose [condition of fire] of man is the choice [terrestrial condition] of the Daimon, and the repose of the Daimon the choice of man; and what I have called man's terrestrial state the Daimon's condition of fire. I might have seen this, as it all follows from the words written by the beggar in The Hour-Glass upon the walls of Babylon.[83]

Even the condition of fire, then, is a phantasmagoric projection, for, as Yeats declares in 1927 in "The Tower":

> being dead, we rise,
> Dream and so create
> Translunar Paradise. (Poems, 415)

In 1919 and 1922 Yeats published two important references to phantasmagoria. The first was in the Preface to The Wild Swans at Coole, and the second in the notes to this collection as it was reprinted in Later Poems. Both references associate the phantasmagoria with Aherne and Robartes and explicitly establish its primacy in Yeats's thought and work:

> Michael Robartes and John Aherne, whose names occur in one or other of these [poems], are characters in some stories I wrote years ago, who have once again become a

> part of the phantasmagoria through which I can alone express my convictions about the world.

****

> [Aherne and Robartes] take their place in a phantasmagoria in which I endeavour to explain my phlosophy [sic] of life and death. (Poems, 852, 821)[84]

Aherne and Robartes, we should remember are not the only characters in Yeats's phantasmagoria. Among their friends is "Mr. Yeats"--just one of many life models used by the poet in the creation of his magic lantern slides. Imagination and reality combine in Yeats's phantasmagoria to create the strange surrealistic effects and heightened emotion that Cook observes are associated with photographic slides made from life models set against background photographs.[85]

Yeats uses phantasmagoria in a number of places to indicate, as in the references to the Aherne and Robartes phantasmagoria, an imaginative embodiment of an author's philosophy of life. In "The Trembling of the Veil" (1922) in Autobiographies, for instance, Yeats describes the imaginary conversations Lionel Johnson claimed to have held with famous men and beautiful women: "These conversations were always admirable in their drama, but never too dramatic or even too polished to lose their casual accidental character; they were the phantasmagoria through which his philosophy of life found its expression."[86] In his 1936 broadcast on modern poetry, Yeats praises Edith Sitwell's work and comments, "Among her fauns, cats, columbines, clowns, wicked fairies, into that phantasmagoria which reminds me of a ballet called The Sleeping Beauty, loved by the last of the Tsars, she interjects a nightmare horror of death and decay."[87] And in A Vision (1937) Yeats writes of the triumph of personality over abstraction as the victory is expressed in Dante's work: "in the Divina Commedia [Dante] imposes his own personality upon a system and a phantasmagoria hitherto impersonal" (A Vision, 289).

The last example of Yeats's use of phantasmagoria that I have discovered occurs in "A General Introduction for My Work," written in 1937 "for a complete edition of Yeats's work which was never produced."[88] Here Yeats expounds "The First Principle" of poetic creation:

> A poet writes always of his personal life, in his finest work out of its tragedy, whatever it be, remorse, lost love, or mere loneliness; he never speaks directly as to someone at the breakfast table, there is always a phantasmagoria . . . even when the poet seems most himself . . . he is never the bundle of accident and incoherence that sits down to breakfast; he has been reborn as an idea, something intended, complete. A novelist might describe his accidence, his incoherence, he [the poet] must not; he is more type than man, more passion than type. . . . He is part of his own phantasmagoria and we adore him because nature has grown intelligible, and by so doing a part of our creative power. . . . "A wise man seeks in Self," says Chandogya Upanishad, "those that are alive and those that are dead and gets what the world cannot give." The world knows nothing because it has made nothing, we know everything because we have made everything.[89]

This passage is extremely important, for in it Yeats summarizes not only his own poetic creed and philosophy of life, but those of Villiers as well. Several points should be emphasized. For Yeats, as for Villiers and Mallarmé, "L'explication orphique de la Terre . . . est le seul devoir du poëte."[90] Poetry, by which Yeats means all truly imaginative or real art, is the ordering of chaos, the transformation of the incoherence of life into a new and structured whole that not only renders life intelligible to others, but also involves them in the creative process. This involvement results from the form taken by poetic expression. Poetry does not communicate through direct statement, for the knowledge it seeks to convey is in essence ineffable. Instead, poetry communicates indirectly through a veil of images and symbols. While enticing those who approach to seek the beauty hidden behind it, the veil both preserves the divine mystery and suggests the occult truth of existence. The veil can only be penetrated by the imaginative participation of the individual seeking revelation.

Poetry is a purification and heightening of life and an intensification of its emotion. The poetic quest after order and wholeness takes the poet (and those who, through their imaginative participation, accompany him as associates) beyond this terrestrial life and the present time to communion with past and future, with the spirits of the dead who are in a privileged position of knowledge, and consequently of power. This communion is Unity of Being, the eternal wholeness of Self of which the accidents of the world are ephemeral and fragmentary reflections.

All of this is implicit in the use made by Villiers and Yeats of the term phantasmagoria and of the image of phantasmagoric projection. The "novelist" as representative of realism and positivism, is the factual photographer of life "transfixing momentary, casual effects,"[91] the mere externalities of this world; but the "poet," the true artist, is the magic lanternist who operates the phantasmagoria, projects images of the hidden truths of existence, and thus brings this world into contact with the divine. The two worlds confront each other from opposite sides of the screen on which the poet projects his phantasmagoria, that dramatic reflection of the ultimate reality figured in a pattern of dynamic images shaped by the poet's skill and imagination, his "Science et Foi," from the prima materia of tradition--whether exoteric or esoteric. The phantasmagoria is the focus of existence, for all of reality is an imaginative projection of either the divine or mortal artist. If all is illusion, then conversely, as Tribulat, M. Redoux, and the English soldiers discover, illusion is real. The phantasmagoria is all that can be known, until the final unity is achieved.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

VILLIERS DE L'ISLE-ADAM AND W.B. YEATS:
THE ALCHEMICAL MODEL AND THE PHANTASMAGORIC IMAGINATION

by

Ⓒ MARY G. HAMILTON

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NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION

[1] W.B. Yeats, "A Symbolical Drama in Paris," *The Bookman*, 6 (April, 1894); rpt. in *Uncollected Prose*, Vol. I, *First Reviews and Articles 1886-1896*, ed. John P. Frayne (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 322.

[2] Ibid., 322-23.

[3] W.B. Yeats, "Aglavaine and Sélysette," *The Bookman*, 12 (Sept., 1897); rpt. in *Uncollected Prose*, Vol. II, *Reviews, Articles and Other Miscellaneous Prose 1897-1939*, ed. John P. Frayne and Colton Johnson (London: Macmillan, 1975), 52.

[4] W.B. Yeats, "The Autumn of the Body," in *Ideas of Good and Evil* (London: Bullen, 1903); rpt. in *Essays and Introductions* (London: Macmillan, 1969), 189.

[5] "Aglavaine and Sélysette," 52.

[6] See for example, W.B. Yeats, *Autobiographies* (London: Macmillan, 1966), 320-21. Among the critics who have shown interest in the relationships of Yeats with French literature are Marie-Hélène Pauly, "W.B. Yeats et les symbolistes français," *Revue de Littérature Comparée*, 20, No. 1 (jan.-mar., 1940), 13-33; A.M. Killen, "Some French Influences in the Works of W.B. Yeats at the end of the Nineteenth Century," *Comparative Literature Studies* (Cardiff), 8 (1942), 1-8; William York Tindall, "The Symbolism of W.B. Yeats," *Accent*, 5, No. 4 (Summer, 1945); rpt. in *The Permanence of Yeats*, ed. James Hall and Martin Steinmann (Macmillan, c1950; rpt. New York: Collier, 1961), 238-49; C.M. Bowra, *The Heritage of Symbolism* (London: Macmillan, 1947); Harry Goldgar, "Deux Dramaturges symbolistes: Villiers de l'Isle-Adam et William Butler Yeats," Diss. Paris 1948; Harry Goldgar "*Axël* de Villiers de l'Isle-Adam et *The Shadowy Waters* de W.B. Yeats," *Revue de Littérature Comparée*, 24 (oct.-dec., 1950), 563-74; Ihab Habib Hassan, "French Symbolism and Modern British Poetry: with Yeats, Eliot and Edith Sitwell as Indices," Diss. University of Pennsylvania 1953; Lloyd Clifford Parks, "The Influence of Villiers de l'Isle-Adam on W.B. Yeats," Diss. Washington 1959; E. Davis, *Yeats's Early Contacts with French Poetry*, Communications of the University of South Africa, C29 (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1961); Marilyn Gaddis Rose, "Yeats's Use of *Axël*," *Comparative Drama*, 4 (Winter, 1970-71), 253-64; Dwight Eddins, *Yeats: The Nineteenth-Century Matrix*

(University, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, c1971), 128-54; Stella Revard, "Yeats, Mallarmé, and the Archetypal Feminine," Papers on Language and Literature, 8, Supplement (Fall, 1972), 112-27.

Lloyd Clifford Parks points out that it was probably Arthur Symons who introduced Yeats to Villiers's work (Parks, 3). Symons' first article on Villiers appeared in The Woman's World in 1889 ("Villiers de l'Isle-Adam," 657-60). In 1891 he published a second article on Villiers, this time in The Illustrated London News ("Villiers de l'Isle-Adam," [Jan. 24, 1891], 118). This was also the year in which the Rhymer's Club was formed and Yeats's friendship with Symons began. Yeats doubtlessly read translations of Villiers's play La Révolte and "La Reine Ysabeau." A translation of La Révolte by Mrs. Thomas Barclay appeared in The Fortnightly (Dec., 1897), a review to which Yeats was a frequent contributor; in Some Memories of W.B. Yeats (New York: Macmillan, 1940), John Masefield notes that Yeats praised La Révolte. Parks is in error when he says that "Queen Ysabeau" and Yeats's "Costello the Proud, Oona Macdermot, and the Bitter Tongue" appear in the same number of The Pageant (Parks, 3). Yeats's story was published in the 1896 issue of The Pageant whereas the translation of "La Reine Ysabeau" by A. Teixeira de Mattos does not appear in The Pageant until the next year, 1897. Nonetheless, Parks is probably correct in assuming Yeats would have read this translation. There is also a reference in Samhain, 1902, to Villiers's Tribulat Bonhomet, although Parks suspects from the form it takes that Yeats had not read the work: "Did not M. Trebulet Bonhommie [sic] discover that one spot of ink would kill a swan?" (Samhain [Oct., 1902], 6; rpt. with spelling corrected in Explorations, selected by Mrs. W.B. Yeats [London: Macmillan, 1962], 90). It may be more than a coincidence that Mallarmé's lecture on Villiers, given in 1890, opens with the following passage:

> Sait-on ce que c'est qu'écrire? Une ancienne et très vague mais jalouse pratique, dont gît le sens au mystère du coeur.
>
> Qui l'accomplit, intégralement se retranche.
>
> Autant, par ouï-dire, que rien n'existe et soi, spécialement, au reflet de la divinité éparse: c'est, ce jeu insensé d'écrire, s'arroger, en vertu d'un doute--la goutte d'encre apparentée à la nuit sublime--quelque devoir de tout recréer, avec des réminiscences, pour avérer qu'on est bien là où l'on doit être.

(Stéphane Mallarmé, "Villiers de l'Isle-Adam: Conférence," in Oeuvres complètes, ed. Henri Mondor and G. Jean-Aubry, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade [Paris]: Gallimard, c1945, 481).

[7] Autobiographies, 320.

[8] See The Letters of W.B. Yeats, ed. Allan Wade (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1954), 230; hereafter cited as Letters.

[9] W.B. Yeats, Preface to Axel, by Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, trans. H.P.R. Finberg (London: Jarrolds, 1925), 9. Like Finberg, many writers and editors, including sometimes Yeats, spell Axël without the umlaut. In quotations I have duplicated the spelling of the original without comment; in my own text I have adopted Villiers's spelling.

[10] "A Symbolical Drama," 325.

[11] Ibid., 324-25. Yeats's zeal for Axël led him to attempt arrangements for an English production of the play, "but the London public was thought unprepared, being in its first enthusiam for Jones and Pinero" (Preface to Axel, 11).

[12] Preface to Axel, 78.

[13] See Letters, 805.

[14] Autobiographies, 115-16.

[15] W.B. Yeats, "Three Irish Poets," The Irish Homestead (Dec., 1897); rpt. in Uncollected Prose, II, 71.

[16] Preface to Axel, 8. See also "Aglavaine and Sélysette," 52. De Gourmont's actual words were: Villiers "a rouvert les portes de l'au-delà closes avec quel fracas, on s'en souvint, et par ces portes toute une génération s'est ruée vers l'infini" ("Villiers de l'Isle-Adam," in Le Livre des Masques [Paris: Société du Mercure de France, 1896], 91). De Gourmont goes on to say that the ecclesiastical hierarchy has both exorcists and doorkeepers (porters). The latter are those who open the doors of the sanctuary to "toutes les bonne volontés." Villiers, according to de Gourmont, was both exorcist and doorkeeper: "il fut l'exorciste du réel et le portier de l'idéal."

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

[1] Jean Moréas, "Un Manifeste littéraire," *Figaro Littéraire* (18 sept., 1886); rpt. in *Les Premières Armes du symbolisme*, ed. Léon Vanier, Curiosités Littéraires (Paris: 1889), 31-39 and in Guy Michaud, *Message poétique du symbolisme* (Paris: Nizet, c1947), 723-26.

[2] "Aglavaine and Sélysette," 52.

[3] Dorothy Knowles, *La Réaction idéaliste au théâtre depuis 1890*, Bibliothèque de la Société des Historiens du Théâtre, 4 (Paris: Droz, 1934), 66. *Axël* was almost an obsession with Villiers: it occupied him on and off for nearly 20 years, from the time when the first part of the drama was serialized in *La Renaissance Littéraire et Artistique* (beginning October 12, 1872), until his death on August 19, 1889. At the time of Villiers's death, *Axël* was in the process of being published by Quantin: 192 pages had been printed and another 32 revised, but the last 70 were still not in final shape. (J.-K. Huysmans gives this information in an appendix to the Quantin edition of *Axël*. The appendix is reprinted with additional manuscript fragments in the Mercure de France edition, where the page numbers have been adjusted to correspond to the text at hand.) Huysmans undertook the task of editing so that *Axël* could finally appear on January 17, 1890. For the publishing and production history of *Axël*, see E. Drougard, "L'*Axël* de Villiers de L'Isle-Adam," *Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France*, 42, No. 4 (oct.-dec., 1935), 509-46. Unless otherwise indicated, all references to *Axël* are to Vol. IV of *Oeuvres complètes*, 11 vols. (Paris: Mercure de France, 1914-1931; rpt. Geneva: Slatkine, 1970).

[4] From a holograph facsimile of the first page of a draft of the lecture, reproduced in an unpaginated appendix to Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, *Oeuvres*, ed. Jacques-Henry Bornecque (Paris: Le Club Français du Livre, 1957). The page from the draft is quoted with some inaccuracies in Bornecque's Introduction to this edition of the *Oeuvres* (Introduction: Villiers de l'Isle-Adam martyr de l'absolu," lxx, lxxi). Bornecque prints, for example, "peut paraître" for "peut y paraître" and "et de toute autre nature" for "est de tout autre nature." Bornecque attributes the discovery of the unpublished text to P.-G. Castex.

[5] Compare Yeats's description of the function of the Mask as changing from "revelation" to "concealment." See W.B. Yeats, A Vision (London: Macmillan, 1962), 85. In "A Preliminary Note on the Text of A Vision (1937)," Yeats and the Occult, ed. George Mills Harper, Yeats Studies ([Toronto]: Macmillan, c1975), Richard J. Finneran concludes that "the 1962 edition of A Vision . . . is the best available text" (320). Unless otherwise indicated, all references to A Vision are to this edition.

The Holy of Holies, in the inner sanctuary of the ancient Jewish Tabernacle housed the sacred Ark of the covenant which was shielded by two Cherubim of beaten gold. A Veil, with an image of the Cherubim it concealed, hid the Holy of Holies and the Ark from all (see Raphael Patai, The Hebrew Goddess [n.p.: Ktav Publishing House, c1967], 105-06). Patai notes that the Cherubim of Ezekiel's vision of the Temple each have two faces and hence are "Janus-like" (106-07).

[6] E. Drougard, "Le Vrai Sens d'Axël," La Grande Revue, 35, No. 4 (avril, 1931), 267.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid., 268.

[9] Ibid., 270.

[10] Villiers, who delighted in playing Wagner's music on the piano, met the German composer on several occasions. He saw practically all his operas and served as an important channel for importing Wagnerism into nineteenth-century France. Villiers wrote a résumé of Rheingold, entitled "L'Or du Rhin," which appeared originally in L'Universel (21 août, 1869), 2-3. It was reprinted with an article on "L'Exposition internationale de peinture de Munich en 1869," under the general heading "Deux Inédits de Villiers de l'Isle-Adam: la grande saison de Munich en 1869," in Les Nouvelles Littéraires, No. 876 (29 juillet, 1939), 1-2. On Villiers's meetings with Wagner, see Judith Gautier, "Le Collier des jours: troisième rang," Revue de Paris (1 fév., 1909), 517-41; (15 fév., 1909), 702-16; (1 mars, 1909), 167-84. A.W. Raitt discusses Wagner's influence on Villiers in Villiers de l'Isle-Adam et le mouvement symboliste (Paris: Corti, 1965), 101-42 et passim. Yeats was also interested in Wagner and waited "with a great deal of expectancy" for a copy of Arthur Symons' essay "The Ideas of Richard Wagner," which appeared in the Quarterly Review (July, 1905) and was reprinted in Symons' Studies in Seven Arts (see Letters, 458). Yeats reported to Symons, "The Wagnerian essay touches my own theories at several points, and enlarges them at one or two" (Letters, 459). James W. Flannery includes a section

on "Yeats and Wagner" in *W.B. Yeats and the Idea of a Theatre* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 102-09.

[11] *Autobiographies*, 194.

[12] Villiers was exposed to a variety of occult philosophies, both through literature and through practitioners. His sources included Dumas, Bulwer-Lytton, Hugo, Gautier, Baudelaire, Marras, Görres, Mendès, Huysmans, V.-E. Michelet, and above all, Eliphas Lévi. François Jollivet-Castelot describes Lévi (the pseudonym of the Abbé Alphonse Louis Constant) as "l'Adepte des Adeptes de ce [dix-neuvième] siècle" (*Comment on devient alchimiste*, Edition de "L'Hyperchimie" [Paris: Chamuel, 1897], 116. Jollivet-Castelot goes on to state that for the aspiring alchemist Lévi's books ought to be the bible of hermeticism (116). In "Villiers de L'Isle-Adam et Eliphas Lévi," E. Drougard details the links between the work of Villiers and that of Eliphas Lévi (*Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire*, 10, No. 3 [juillet-sept., 1931] 505-30). Drougard includes a list of closely parallel quotations from each author, concluding that Villiers has borrowed a number of themes, ideas, images, and symbols directly from Lévi. Among these are the magus, his wand, the rose, the mantle, and the lamp. We need not limit to Lévi the sources contributing to these aspects of Villiers's work in order to agree with Drougard that Lévi was a strong influence on Villiers. Metamorphosis and alchemy are among the many topics discussed by Lévi in his works, which include *Dogme et rituel de la haute magie* (1855 and 1856; 2nd ed. 1861); *Histoire de la magie* (1860); *La Clef des grands mystères* (1861). On Lévi's influence on Villiers, see also Harry Goldgar, "Deux Dramaturges," 205-07. Yeats was also acquainted with Lévi's work. Thomas Leslie Dume reports ("William Butler Yeats: A Survey of his Reading," Diss. Temple 1950) that Yeats read A.E. Waite's *The Mysteries of Magic: A Digest of the Writings of Eliphas Lévi* (1886). This is a direct translation from Lévi's writings with commentary by Waite (Dume, 131). Yeats would also have known Lévi's work through MacGregor Mathers, who quotes Lévi at length in such works as *The Kabbalah Unveiled*. Yeats mentions Lévi in a number of places, including *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*, *The Speckled Bird*, and the notes to *Michael Robartes and the Dancer* (1921). For information on the relationship of Lévi to the Order of the Golden Dawn, see Ellic Howe, *The Magicians of the Golden Dawn: A Documentary History of a Magical Order 1887-1923* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972); Kathleen Raine, *Yeats, the Tarot and the Golden Dawn*, New Yeats Papers, 2 (Dublin: The Dolmen Press, 1972; and George Mills Harper, *Yeats's Golden Dawn* (London: Macmillan, 1974).

[13] Maria Deenen points out that Villiers has written "pantacles" for "pentacles" (*Le Merveilleux dans l'oeuvre de Villiers de l'Isle-Adam* [Paris: Courville, 1939], 86n). Drougard and Raitt attribute

Villiers's peculiar spelling to the influence of Lévi's Dogme et rituel de la haute magie (see Drougard, "Villiers . . . et Eliphas Lévi," 527; Raitt, 193).

[14] P[ierre]-V[incenti] Piobb, Clef universelle des sciences secrètes d'après les indications de la Poligraphie de Jean Tritheme, Omnium Littéraire (Paris: Les Editions des Champs-Elysées, c1950), I, 26.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Kaspar tells Axël, "Comte, soyons positifs, soyons sur la terre" (Axël, 133). Peter Bürgisser draws attention to Kaspar's positivist character in La Double Illusion de l'or et de l'amour chez Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, Publications Universitaires Européenne, Series 13, Vol. I (Berne: Lang, 1969), 46-47.

[17] "Our gold is not the common gold": quoted and translated in C.G. Jung, Psychology and Alchemy, trans. R.F.C. Hull, 2nd ed., Vol. XII of The Collected Works, Bollingen Series, 20 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, c1968), 34, 78n. Jung attributes the phrase to the Rosarium philosophorum (1550), reprinted in Artis auriferae (1593), II, 220.

[18] Eliphas Lévi, Dogme et rituel de la haute magie, new ed., Librairie Générale des Sciences Occultes, 2 vols. (Paris: Chacornac, 1930), II, 164, 166. Unless otherwise indicated, all references to Dogme et rituel are to this edition. "The absolute" is a recurrent term in alchemical works. Arthur Edward Waite explains that the term signifies "that transcendent Unity which is the perfection of the totality of Nature, 'for what is called the "absolute," the "absolute perfection," and the perfection of Nature, are one and the same'" (Alchemists through the Ages [before 1889; rpt. Blauvelt, N.Y.: Steiner, 1970], 11). Waite is quoting from "Remarks on Alchemy and the Alchemists," published anonymously in 1865 by "an American writer, named Hitchcock" (Waite, Alchemists, 10).

[19] Carl Jung gives a detailed analysis of what he sees as the psychological implications of alchemy in Psychology and Alchemy. Writing of Janus, Peter Bürgisser says, "On a l'impression d'un alchimiste faisant une de ses expériences, seulement il n'opère pas avec des éléments chimiques, mais avec des âmes humaines, ou bien avec différentes entités de l'âme du poète dont il est une lui-même" (68). Much of the general information on alchemy which follows has been included previously in my article "Strindberg's Alchemical Way of the Cross," Mosaic, 7, No. 4 (Summer, 1974), 139-53.

[20] I discuss the significance of the opal and diamond necklaces later in this chapter. Maria Deenen (52) remarks on Villiers's fascination with gold and precious stones, especially the opal, which appears not only in Axël, but also, for example, in "Véra," "L'Inconnue," and "Droit du passée."

[21] "This magistery proceeds first from one root, which afterwards expands into several things, and returns again to the one": Emperor Heraclius, quoted by Morienus Romanus, Sermo de transmutatione metallorum, rpt. in Artis auriferae, II; quoted and translated by Jung, 293n. In the version of Axël which appeared in La Jeune France, the book Kaspar glances at in Scene V of the second part (Traité des causes secondes) opens with the words: "La Nature est amoureuse du vide; la gueule du serpent attire sa queue; il se fuit et, en se fuyant, il se poursuit" (La Jeune France, 89 [déc., 1885], 257). Drougard quotes this epigraph and the passage it appears to be based on in Lévi's Dogme et rituel: "Le principe actif cherche le principe passif, le plein est amoureux du vide. La gueule du serpent attire sa queue, et en tournant sur lui-même, il se fuit et il se poursuit" (quoted in Drougard, "Villiers . . . et Eliphas Lévi," 510, 511).

[22] Jung, 292-95. "Mercurius" is so central to alchemy as to have given it one of its many names: the Hermetic Art. Lévi refers to the "serpent qui se mord la queue" as symbol of the wholeness that results from the attraction of opposites. See, for example, Lévi, Dogme et rituel, I, 125, 131.

[23] In his review of Axël for The Bookman, Yeats writes of "the fourfold renunciation--of the cloister, of the active life of the world, of the labouring life of the intellect, of the passionate life of love." He concludes that in Axël "The infinite is alone worth attaining, and the infinite is the possession of the dead. Such appears to be the moral" ("A Symbolical Drama," 324).

Pierre Mariel points out that Axël is a drama of renunciation. He links this aspect of the work with Lévi, specifically with Dogme et rituel:

> Or la règle d'or édictée par Eliphas Lévi c'est: "Renonce!"
>
> Et cet extrait n'est-il pas la glose même de ces renoncements successifs [d'Axël]:
>
> "Apprendre à se vaincre, c'est donc apprendre à vivre, et les austérités du stoïcisme n'étaient pas une vaine ostentation de liberté!
>
> "Céder aux forces de la nature, c'est suivre le courant de la vie collective, c'est être esclave

> des causes secondes.
>
> "Résister à la nature et la dompter, c'est se faire une vie impersonnelle et impérissable, c'est s'affranchir des vicissitudes de la vie et de la mort."
>
> Le double suicide qui achève la [quatrième] partie d'Axël [sic] prend tout son sens après la méditation de ce passage:
>
> "La raison suprême étant le seul principe invariable, et par conséquent impérissable, puisque le changement est ce que nous appelons la mort, l'intelligence qui adhère fortement et s'identifie en quelque manière à ce principe, se rend par là même invariable, et, par conséquent, immortel.
>
> "On comprend que, pour adhérer invariablement à la raison, il faut s'être rendu indépendant de toutes les forces qui produisent par le mouvement fatal et nécessaire les alternatives de la vie et de la mort. *Savoir souffrir, s'abstenir et mourir, tels sont donc les premiers secrets qui nous mettent au-dessus de la douleur, des convoitises sensuelles et de la peur du néant*"

(Pierre Mariel, Introduction to *Axël*, Littérature et Tradition, 1 [Paris: La Colombe, c1960], 24-25; emphasis is Mariel's). The quotations from Lévi are found on pages 113 and 110 respectively of Volume I of the edition cited in this dissertation.

[24] Piobb, II, 331. In his Preface to Jollivet-Castelot's *Comment on devient alchimiste*, "Dr. Papus" [G. Encausse] comments that "la pratique de l'évolution des métaux n'était pour [l'alchemiste] que l'application d'une loi générale dont Darwin et ses disciples n'ont retrouvé qu'un bien petit côté" (xx-xxi). One of the oldest of alchemical documents, the *Tabula Smaragdina* or *Emerald Table* attributed to "Hermes Trismegistus," presents the monist doctrine: "Il est Vrai . . . que toutes Choses se sont faites d'un Seul, par la Médiation d'un Seul: Ainsi Toutes Choses sont nées de cette même unique Chose, par Adaptation" (trans. by Jollivet-Castelot, 1). Later in his work, Jollivet-Castelot elaborates on this doctrine: "L'Alchimiste doit être *hylozoïste*, c'est-à-dire considérer la Matière comme vivante, la respecter conséquemment, la manipuler avec conscience de sa potentialité intellectuelle, y voir l'Etre multiplié, fragmenté, divisé, souffrant, mais tendant par incessante Evolution à se reconstituer dans l'Unité de la Substance" (Jollivet-Castelot, 132). See also "Sapere Aude" [W. Wynn Westcott], Preface, *An English Translation of the Hermetic Arcanum of Penes Nos Unda Tagi*, 1623, Vol, I of *Collectanea Hermetica* (London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1893), 8.

[25] Bon. Carra de Vaux, "Alchemy (Muhammadan)," *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. James Hastings (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1908), I, 291.

[26] Piobb, II, 333-34.

[27] Ibid., 339-40. Compare Edouard Schuré's description of the Pythagorean teaching on "la loi du ternaire . . . la pierre angulaire de la science ésotérique":

> Or le monde réel est triple. Car de même que l'homme se compose de trois éléments distincts mais fondus l'un dans l'autre, le corps, l'âme et l'esprit; de même l'univers est divisé en trois sphères concentrique: le monde naturel, le monde humain et le monde divin. La *Triade* ou *loi du ternaire* est donc la loi constitutive des choses et la véritable clef de la vie. . . .
>
> Pythagore admettait que l'esprit de l'homme ou l'intellect tient de Dieu sa nature immortelle, invisible, absolument active. Car l'esprit est ce qui se meut soi-même. Il nommait le corps sa partie mortelle, divisible et passive. Il pensait que ce que nous appellons *âme* est étroitement uni à l'esprit, mais formé d'un troisième élément intermédiaire qui provient du *fluide cosmique*. L'âme ressemble donc à un corps éthéré que l'esprit se tisse et se construit à lui-même. Sans ce corps éthéré, le corps matériel ne pourrait pas être évertué et ne serait qu'une masse inerte et sans vie.

(Edouard Schuré, *Les Grands Initiés esquisse de l'histoire secrète des religions* [Paris: Perrin, 1908], 334, 332-33)

[28] Mariel comments on Sara's names: "Par ces prénoms, l'héroine incarne la Femme Eternelle en ces Trois Règnes: *Eve* avant la Loi (Gen., II, 22); *Sara* (qui signifie princesse) durant la Loi de Yaheveh et d'Abraham (Gen., XVII, 15); *Emmanuèle* (Dieu est avec elle) au temps de la Grâce (Matth., I, 13)" (259 n2).

[29] Mariel, 260. It is perhaps a coincidence, but an interesting one, that among the stories of diverse mystic origins attributed to alchemy are legends that Isis taught the Great Art. In *Le Silence éloquent: thèmes et structure de* l'Eve future *de Villiers de l'Isle-Adam* (Paris: Corti, 1975), Deborah Conyngham remarks that in Villiers's story "L'Inconnue" there is "une correspondance entre la femme inconnue et l'opale qu'elle porte. . . . [Il] semble exister entre l'opale et cette femme des rapports d'une puissante valeur symbolique. Félicien [l'héros] croit discerner en l'opale le caractère de l'âme inconnue" (Conyngham, 79). Conyngham also refers the reader to the opal in "Véra": "Plus Véra semble vivante, plus l'opale brille" (Conyngham, 79n).

[30] Note the constant association of Sara with the colour white; see, for instance, the frequent references to her pallor, as on page 215, and the "longue tunique de moire blanche" that she wears for the taking of her vows (*Axël*, 34).

[31] Compare Villiers's use of the name Azraël in "*L'Annonciateur*" (E. Drougard, "Les Sources d'*Axël*," *Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France*, 43 [1936], 554-55). There is an interesting reference to "The Archangel Axel" in a song attributed by Lady Gregory to Yeats. The song was printed in Lady Gregory's play "The Travelling Man," *The Shanachie* (Spring, 1906). See *The Variorum Edition of the Poems of W.B. Yeats*, ed. Peter Allt and Russell K. Alspach (New York: Macmillan, c1957), 773-74; hereafter cited as *Poems*.

[32] Piobb notes that alchemists pun, for example, on the word *elixir*, which recalls the Greek *helix*. The latter may be written in two ways: with an *epsilon* it means circular movement, and with an *eta* it means comrade (Piobb, II, 378). Piobb also points to a pun with *athanor*, the alchemist's furnace. The word recalls the Greek *athanès*, which was used instead of *athanatos* (meaning immortal, imperishable). From this the alchemists derived *athanos* and concocted athanor "pour évoquer par un calembour français 'acte en or'" (Piobb, II, 347). Conyngham stresses the importance to Villiers of the play on words: "sa philosophie dépend en partie de la multiplicité de significations et des jeux de mots" (Conyngham, 19). She discusses the role of the pun in Villiers's work at some length (see especially Conyngham, 34-40).

[33] See J.E. Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, trans. Jack Sage (New York: Philosophical Library, 1962), 154.

[34] Jung, 434.

[35] On Janus's being a doctor, see *Axël*, 24, 285; on his telepathic powers, see 190, 192, 200.

[36] Drougard, "Le Vrai Sens," 269.

[37] Jung, 223, drawing upon Jacobus Boschius, *Symbolographia, sive de arte symbolica sermones septem* (Augsburg, 1702).

[38] Jung, 229. Alchemists sometimes speak of the *viriditas* (greening) after the *nigredo*, but Jung notes that this colour stage "was never generally recognized."

[39] See Jung, 229-32 and Cirlot, 6.

[40] Lévi devotes an entire chapter of Dogme et rituel to "Le Septénaire des talismans." He suggests relationships between, for example, the seven archangels, the seven planets, the seven colours of the spectrum, the seven musical notes, the seven virtues and seven vices, the seven sacraments, the seven magical works, and the seven days of the week (II, 111-33).

[41] Pernétry, Dictionnaire mytho-hermétique, quoted in Piobb, II, 337.

[42] Piobb, II, 341. Compare Lévi: "Séparer le subtil de l'épais dans la première opération, qui est tout intérieur, c'est affranchir son âme de tout préjugé et de tout vice" (Dogme et rituel, I, 253). This is a gloss on a passage from the Emerald Table, which Lévi translates as "Tu sépareras la terre du feu, le subtil de l'épais, doucement, avec grande industrie" (I, 252).

[43] Piobb, II, 347-48.

[44] Villiers was influenced in his early career by Bertrand's poems in prose, Gaspard de la Nuit. While editor-in-chief of La Revue des Lettres et des Arts, Villiers published a number of selections from Gaspard under the title Fantaisies. (See Raitt, 154-55.) Villiers knew Weber's great romantic triumph, Der Freischütz, which was first performed in 1821. He gave the opera an important role in L'Eve future, where Alicia Clary's miscomprehension of its nature and significance is used as an illustration and gauge of her lack of soul (see L'Eve future, Vol. I of Oeuvres complètes, 54, 333-36). Weber's Kaspar, like Villiers's, is a proponent of the "fast" life of the profane, a life marked by wine, women and gambling. He has been rejected by the heroine, Agathe, and passed over as the probable successor to her father, the royal forester, in favour of the younger hunter, Max. Consequently, Kaspar plots revenge. He convinces Max that, if he uses magic bullets made at midnight in the forbidden Wolf's Glen with the help of the devil Samiel, Max can pass the shooting test that will win him both the succession and Agathe's hand. Unknown to Max, Kaspar has made a pact with Samiel that the seventh bullet is to kill Agathe. In the end, Agathe is saved from death by a combination of Max's basic innocence, her own goodness and purity, and a bridal crown made of white roses blessed by a holy hermit. With ironic justice, Max's seventh bullet which "belongs to the Evil One," kills Kaspar, whose soul is taken by Samiel (Libretto, Der Freischütz, by Carl Maria von Weber, poem by Johann Friedrich Kind, Eng. trans. William Mann, with Siegfried Vogel, Gundula Janowitz, Theo

Adam, Peter Schreier, cond. Carlos Kleiber, Staatskapelle Dresden; Deutsche Grammophon, Polydor International, c1973, 13). I am indebted to Alan G. Meech for bringing the plot of *Der Freischütz* to my attention.

[45] In *The Lore of the New Testament* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1966, c1952), Joseph Gaer relates some very interesting legends concerning the magi. See especially Chapter 6. In his notes Gaer refers to the tradition of the three magi:

> King Melchior, the old man; King Caspar, the beardless youth; and King Balthasar, the swarthy man in the prime of life. Practically all fifteenth-century paintings portray the Magi as three in number, with the youngest invariably black. This is based upon the assumption that the Magi represented all ages and all races of mankind who shall ultimately come to accept Jesus. (Gaer,332)

Gaer's sources include Jacobus de Voraigne, *The Golden Legend* or *The Lives of the Saints*, "as Englished by William Caxton," 7 vols. (London: Dent, 1800); and Bernhard Pick, *The Extra-Canonical Life of Christ* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1903). In *Dogme et rituel*, Lévi connects the magi and Christianity with the occult tradition:

> L'étoile allégorique des mages n'est autre chose que le mystérieux pentagramme; et ces trois rois, enfants de Zoroastre, conduits par l'étoile flamboyante au berceau du Dieu microcosmique, suffiraient pour prouver les origines toutes cabalistiques et véritablement magiques du dogme chrétien. Un de ces rois est blanc, l'autre est noir, et le troisième est brun. Le blanc offre de l'or, symbole de vie et de lumière; le noir de la myrrhe, image de la mort et de la nuit; le brun présente l'encens, emblème de la divinité du dogme conciliateur des deux principes; puis ils retournent dans leur pays par un autre chemin, pour montrer qu'un culte nouveau n'est qu'une nouvelle route pour conduire l'humanité à la religion unique, celle du ternaire sacré et du rayonnant pentagramme, le seul *catholicisme* éternel. (II, 98)

[46] Since dragon and Mercurius the Uroboros are one in alchemy, when Axël declares himself to be the guardian-dragon, he allies himself with Janus/Mercurius and so moves a step closer to transmutation.

[47] "Consider, man, what you were before birth, and what you

will be right until the end. Once, indeed, you did not exist. Then, shaped of worthless stuff and nourished in your mother's womb with menstrual blood, a little membrane served as your tunic."

[48] Note also that Axël and Ukko wear eagle feathers in their hunting caps and that Ukko reports Axël has shot a vulture that was "perdu dans les nuées noires, dans le tonnerre, quand la balle du maître s'en est allée l'y surprendre" (Axël, 79).

[49] Cirlot, 68.

[50] Piobb, II, 364.

[51] Ibid., 343.

[52] Cirlot, 6.

[53] Piobb, II, 343.

[54] The link with Christian doctrine is strong in the alchemical tradition. Indeed, the lapis philosophorum or philosopher's stone, the source and means of alchemical transmutation, was associated with Christ. Jung writes of the connection between the two (see 345-431), pointing out that for alchemists like Petrus Bonus in the fourteenth century, "the philosophical [i.e. alchemical] opus seemed like a parallel and imitation -- perhaps even a continuation-- of the divine work of redemption" (Jung,375). I quote further from Jung's discussion of "The Lapis-Christ Parallel" later in this chapter.

[55] Drougard, "Le Vrai Sens," 270. Alchemists viewed the role of intermediary or messiah as natural to the adept: "Sa mission consiste à aider ses frères durant les étapes pénibles de leur ascension forcée vers Dieu. Les Adeptes jouent donc le rôle de Messies" (Jollivet-Castelot, 135). Peter Bürgisser speaks of Axël as "le rédempteur de tous les hommes":

> sa personne prend la valeur d'un Jésus-Christ de l'or et de l'amour, annonciateur d'un monde nouveau d'une humanité située désormais au-delà des contingences et des instincts de la nature. Axël rachète aux hommes leur divinité oubliée par sa propre divinisation. (Bürgisser, 69)

[56] In describing Axël's rejection of Janus's occult world,

Bürgisser uses an interesting image: "Axël va se hasarder dans les sphères ténébreuses des instincts humains, il va explorer l'enfer qu'il porte en lui pour en arracher les secrets en les réveillant" (59-60; emphasis mine). Again the parallel with Christianity is important: we should remember that Christian tradition and the Apostle's Creed state that after his death on the cross Christ "descended into hell" where he remained until his resurrection. Axël's descent into hell, appropriately, takes place in the burial vault beneath his castle where he is joined by Sara.

[57] See, for example, Axël, 38-39.

[58] See Axël, 38. In his notes on Axël, Bornecque points out that Villiers has completely reversed the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas, to whom he attributes this concept of a material soul. See Jacques-Henry Bornecque, Notes to Villiers, Oeuvres, ed. Bornecque, 1067. Drougard has discovered that Villiers did not take the reference directly from St. Thomas, but from a comment on him in A. Véra's Introduction à la philosophie de Hegel, (E. Drougard, "L'Erudition de Villiers de l'Isle-Adam," Mercure de France, série moderne, 225 [1 oct.-1 nov., 1929], 107, 110-11).

[59] Janus's rejection of Axël in the speech immediately following the renunciation is undercut by his pronouncement shortly after that "l'Oeuvre s'accomplit" (Axël, 213-14, 216).

[60] In "Axel, le Faust français," Le Lotus Bleu, 49, No. 11 (fév., 1939), Georges Méautis writes about the importance of Sara and Axël's renunciation of received wisdom in favour of self discovery and initiation (Méautis, "Axel," 349).

[61] See above, note 32 to this chapter.

[62] See Piobb, II, 378.

[63] Lévi, Dogme et rituel, I, 251. Note the parallels with Axël's speech on page 192. Drougard matches this passage from Lévi with Janus's speech on pages 206-07 ("Villiers . . . et Eliphas Lévi," 525). See also Lévi's description of the magus as "microprosope, c'est-à-dire la créature du petit monde. La première science magique étant la connaissance de soi-même, la première aussi de toutes les oeuvres de la science, celle qui renferme toutes les autres et qui est le principe du grande oeuvre, c'est la création de soi-même" (Dogme et rituel, I, 110).

[64] Ibid., II, 27.

[65] Ibid., I, 254.

[66] Bürgisser notes that Janus "incorpore le destin, la nécessité, la force qui contraint les deux jeunes héros à s'accomplir de façon éclatante par la mort" (Bürgisser, 68).

[67] Ibid., 45.

[68] Ibid., 46. In their Notes to the first edition of *A Vision*, George Mills Harper and Walter Kelly Hood point out that one of the recurrent themes in the 1925 version of Yeats's book is the opposition of fate and destiny. As the terms are defined by Yeats, this opposition means essentially an opposition between fate and freedom, since, "whereas the Fated is required by forces external to the self, Destiny is an expression of choice by the self" (George Mills Harper and Walter Kelly Hood, eds., Notes, *A Critical Edition of Yeats's A Vision* [1925][London: Macmillan, 1978], 11). The critical edition by Harper and Hood is a facsimile of William Butler Yeats, *A Vision: An Explanation of Life Founded Upon the Writing of Geraldus and Upon Certain Doctrines Attributed to Kusta Ben Luka* (London: T. Werner Laurie, 1925), hereafter cited as *A Vision* (1925). The only differences between the original text and the Harper and Hood reproduction "consist of the use of less expensive paper and binding, of the introduction of lineation, of the substitution of ordinary for brown paper for the woodcuts (facing the title page and pages xv and 8) and of the use of black rather than red ink for the upper cone and its annotations in the diagram of the historical cones (177)" (Preface, vii). On fate and destiny in *A Vision* (1925), see, for example, pages 15, 44-45.

[69] Jung writes of the journey (see especially 368ff). He specifically mentions the peregrinations of Osiris, Herakles, Enoch, Hermes Trismegistus, Michael Maier, and of the Argonauts while on their quest for the Golden Fleece. Among the many works in which the journey motif is intimately linked with transformation are Homer's *Odyssey*, Apuleius's *Golden Ass*, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Goethe's *Faust*, Heine's *Dieux en Exil* and *Atta Troll*, Rimbaud's *Le Bateau ivre*, Strindberg's *To Damascus*, Gide's *Voyage d'Urien*, Yeats's *Stories of Red Hanrahan*, *Wanderings of Oisin*, *The Shadowy Waters*, and *Rosa Alchemica*.

[70] Piobb, I, 35. Compare the images of the hunt that recur in Yeats's work. See, for example, the hound and hornless deer and the

young man and the woman with the golden apple discussed in my Chapter Two (108-09, 201-02).

[71] Cirlot, 65; based on Diccionario universal de la mitologià (Barcelona, 1835).

[72] Ibid., 265; based on Paul Diel, Le Symbolisme dans la mythologie grecque (Paris: 1952).

[73] The guisarme has a sharp curved blade and a hook or beak at the back. It is an interesting coincidence that when Axël first appears in the play, he wears an axe in his belt (Axël, 114).

[74] Notice the important roles played by the old retainers in Axël: Herr Zacharias, Gotthold, Miklaus, and Hartwig.

[75] Cirlot, 265.

[76] Piobb, II, 364.

[77] Ibid., 346.

[78] Ibid., 347-48.

[79] In his manuscript notes for the lecture on Axël, Villiers described Janus as "une sorte d'austère précepteur, ou, plutôt d'initiateur magique" (quoted in Gustave Guiches, "Villiers de l'Isle-Adam: documents inédits," La Nouvelle Revue, 64, No. 1 (1 mar, 1890), 119.

[80] Jacques Guicharnaud, Afterword, Axël, trans. June Guicharnaud (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, c1970), 196.

[81] Piobb, II, 346.

[82] Ibid., 350.

[83] Sara and Axël actually call each other brother and sister. See Axël, 239, 240, 244.

[84] Piobb, II, 350.

[85] In the *Emerald Table*, Hermes speaks of ascent followed by descent and then the union of opposites: "Il monte de la Terre au Ciel, et de rechef il descend du Ciel en Terre, et il reçoit la Force des Choses d'En Haut et d'En Bas" (in Jollivet-Castelot, 2).

[86] Piobb, II, 353.

[87] Auguste Strindberg, "*Rosa Mystica*," *Rosa Alchemica*, 11 (nov., 1902) 354-56. As in real-life gardens, in traditional symbolism the number of petals on the rose may vary. A different number changes the symbolism somewhat. Besides the five-petalled rose, the seven- and eight-petalled are quite common. Seven petals associate the rose with the multiple symbolism attached to this mystical/magical number, and eight petals, Cirlot reports, symbolize regeneration (Cirlot, 263, based on Ramiro de Pinedo, *El Simbolismo en la escultura medieval española* [Madrid, 1930]; see also Jung, passim). Strindberg's reference to the rose's desire for blood calls to mind the manuscript fragment mentioned earlier in which Sara revives her dying rose for one day by stabbing a young man (*Axël*, 280).

[88] M. Clavelle, "Les Rose-Croix et l'église intérieure," *Le Voile d'Isis*, 36, No. 137 (mai, 1931), 286-87.

[89] Ibid., 287.

[90] Among the symbols of the Order of the Golden Dawn, to which Yeats belonged, was the Rose-Cross. Israel Regardie describes the Rose-Cross as "a Lamen or badge synthesizing a vast concourse of ideas, representing in a single emblem the Great Work itself--the harmonious reconciliation in one symbol of diverse and apparently contradictory concepts, the reconciliation of divinity and manhood" (Israel Regardie, *The Golden Dawn*, 3rd ed., rev., 4 vols. [River Falls, Wisc.: Hazel Hills, 1970], I, 93-94).

[91] The first two emphases are Villiers's, the last two mine. Note Villiers's use of the verb "éclore." Although employed for the opening of flowers, its primary association is with the hatching of eggs; its use here suggests the rose is the parthenogenetic child of Sara's soul, her alchemical homunculus (which alchemists believe is hatched from the "philosopher's egg," the egg-shaped retort or flask which symbolizes the *prima materia*). Jung explains the symbolism of the egg:

> In alchemy the egg stands for the chaos apprehended

> by the artifex, the prima materia containing the captive world-soul. Out of the egg--symbolized by the round cooking-vessel--will rise the eagle or phoenix, the liberated soul, which is ultimately identical with the Anthropos who was imprisoned in the embrace of Physis" (Jung, 202; see also 66, 237-38).

From the Greek for origin, Physis is Nature in her role as the source of growth and development. Perhaps Sara's homunculus/rose dies because it is parthenogenetic and lacks the male component, for when it is hatched, Sol and Luna have not yet been united. There is an interesting parallel between the image of Sara's role and the passage in Part III, scene i, in which Janus urges Axël, "Echappe-toi, comme eux [les dieux], par la foi, dans l'Incréé. Accomplis-toi dans ta lumière astrale! *Surgis*! *Moissonne*! Monte! *Deviens ta propre fleur*! Tu n'es que ce que tu penses: pense-toi donc éternel" (*Axël*, 193).

[92] See Lévi, *Dogme et rituel*, II, 295.

[93] Cirlot, 6.

[94] Jung, 295.

[95] Jung, 292. Sara releases the treasure from its hiding place by pushing with the point of her dagger between the eyes of the death's head on the Auërsperg shield (*Axël*, 229)-- a winged and silver death's head. Compare Mercury's traditional winged helmet. The *caput mortuum* or death's head is an alchemical symbol for the survival of life and thought. It is sometimes used as a receptacle in the alchemical process and is sometimes presented as that which remains after calcination. See Cirlot, 285; Jung, 401.

[96] Jung, 293. Drougard points out from manuscript fragments that originally Janus assumed an even larger role in *Axël* than he does in the published version of the play: he appeared on stage right from the beginning and reappeared at the end "pour approuver la conduite des personnages qu'il a lui-même mis en présence" (E. Drougard, "Fragments manuscrits d'*Axël*, *Revue des Sciences Humaines*, N.S., No. 77 (jan.-mar., 1955), 119.

[97] Piobb, II, 357.

[98] The spiritual wedding of Axël and Sara is paralleled by the earthly betrothal of Ukko who, just moments before, is heard singing a love song off stage (see Axël, 269). The world of Ukko and his fiancée, Luisa, is the parallel and inverse correspondence of the world of Axël and Sara. Like Axël and Sara, Ukko and Luisa are predestined for each other (Axël, 83). They celebrate their betrothal (the beginning of their earthly life together) as Axël and Sara die (end their earthly life and begin their spiritual life together). Ukko and Luisa are to marry in the autumn (Axël, 84) whereas Axël and Sara conduct their mystic marriage in the spring. The relationship between Ukko and Luisa, as representatives of this earthly life, and Axël and Sara, as representatives of the spiritual life of transcendence, bears a striking resemblance to the relationship of inverse correspondence that Yeats insists exists between the human world and the divine world of faery. See my Chapters Two and Four, passim.

[99] Lévi writes, "Raymond Lulle, un des grands et sublimes maîtres de la science [d'alchimie] a dit que pour faire de l'or il faut d'abord avoir de l'or. On ne fait rien de rien" (Dogme et rituel, II, 297).

[100] "Penes nos unda Tagi" [Jean d'Espagnet], 31. D'Espagnet's Arcanum Hermeticum, first published in 1623 in Latin, is, according to Westcott, the most widely read and reprinted "alchymic tract" (Preface, 7).

[101] Piobb, II, 359. Note the use of the familiar form of the second person, an indication of the collegial fraternity of the alchemists mentioned earlier.

[102] The only other day in the liturgical year on which the Catholic Church does not celebrate mass is Good Friday.

[103] In "The Symbolism of Poetry," Yeats writes of the twilight time that is "the moment of contemplation, the moment when we are both asleep and awake, which is the one moment of creation" (in Essays and Introductions, 159).

[104] See Drougard, "Le Vrai Sens," 272-75.

[105] Raitt, 138. See also 254, 260, where Raitt insists that Villiers's "illusionisme" and "idéalisme intransigeant" must lead to "un nihilisme intégral."

[106] Matt. 10:39.

[107] Drougard, "Le Vrai Sens," 277.

[108] The question of irony presents still another problem, for it brings in an additional interpretation of the play. Drougard considers these last lines to be a minor flaw in the play, the timid expression of a tardy scruple attempting unsuccessfully to turn Axël from an anti-Christian into a Christian mystery. He sees the problem lines as the intrusion of the author in a last ditch effort to stand up for orthodoxy but unable in the balance to undo what the play itself really says (Drougard, "Le Vrai Sens," 278). It is possible, however, to interpret the problem lines straight, as Drougard does, but to read the entire play as ironic, as Villiers's joke on his audience, a grand put-on the true meaning of which only becomes clear in these last few lines. This is one of the difficulties encountered with an author who, like Villiers, relies heavily on irony: just how does the reader know when he is being ironic and when he is not? Without at this point opening up the Pandora's box that is the critical question of irony, I shall simply say that I do not favour this totally ironic interpretation of Axël. One perhaps naîve reason for rejecting this approach is that it assumes a use of irony so subtle as to become ultimately meaningless, for the point has been missed by almost everyone, including all of Villiers's contemporaries who, according to their biases, either praised or condemned Villiers for rebellion against established Christian and bourgeois beliefs. If Villiers was being ironic throughout Axël and having his audience on, the joke turned out to be on him.

[109] Regardie, I, 35-36.

[110] Ibid., 36-37.

[111] Ibid., 38-39.

[112] Cirlot, 77; based on Harold Bayley, The Lost Language of Symbolism (London, 1912; rpt., 1951).

[113] Jung, 79.

[114] The Latin is: "Intelligite, filii sapientum, quod hic lapis preciosissimus clamat, . . . et lumen meum omne lumen superat ac mea bona omnibus bonis sunt sublimiora. . . . Ego gigno lumen, tenebrae autem naturae meae sunt" (Rosarium philosophorum, 239, quoted and trans. in Jung, 79, 79n).

[115] Jung, Chapter 5, 345-431. For Lévi's approach to the Stone, see Dogme et rituel, I, 336-43. Lévi draws attention to the Biblical puns on "rock" and "Peter," and to the fact that Christ calls himself the "corner stone."

[116] Jung, 427-28.

[117] "All hail, Soul! The last one alone shall shine through," and "I hope to rise up again bejewelled on high." See Axël, 19-20, 227, 229. Mariel translates the Latin mottos respectively as "Courage! La seule dernière (étoile) flamboie de tous les feux," and "Gonflé de sève, j'espère ressusciter plus haut" (Mariel, 273).

[118] Cirlot, 77; based on Ania Teillard, Il Simbolismo dei Sogni (Milan, 1951).

[119] Compare Lévi's "La mort n'existe pas pour le sage" (Dogme et rituel, I, 346) and "Quand les hommes sauront vivre, ils ne mourront plus; ils se transformeront comme la chrysalide qui devient un papillon brillant" (ibid., II, 3). "L'homme," Lévi insists, "qui cherche et trouve une glorieuse mort a foi dans l'immortalité, et l'humanité tout entière y croit avec lui, car elle lui élève des autels ou des statues, en signe de vie immortelle" (ibid., I, 110-11). Villiers's play contains an interesting variation on the image of the statue. In the passage in which Axël protests the necessity for detachment he complains, "c'est acheter trop cher le néant: je suis homme; je ne veux pas devenir une statue de pierre." Janus replies, "l'univers ne se prosterne que devant les statues" (Axël, 192).

[120] Lévi, Dogme et rituel, I, 113.

[121] Drougard, "Fragments manuscrits," 117. See also Georges Méautis, "Villiers de l'Isle-Adam," Rythmes et Couleurs (jan.-fév., 1962); rpt. in Thucydide et l'impérialisme athénien suivi d'un choix d'études (Neuchâtel: A la Baconnière, c1964), 119. See also, Bornecque, "Villiers . . . martyr," xc. Méautis cannot recollect whether Janus's phrase is "Les délivrés" or "Les élus."

[122] "Axël, Villiers l'a écrit de sa main sur les épreuves, devait avoir cinq actes, et le dernier -- confidence capitale et inaperçue que fit H. le Roux -- devait s'appeler Le Monde astral" (Bornecque, "Villiers . . . martyr," lxxxvii, quoted in part in Mariel, 28).

[123] Méautis, "Villiers," 119.

[124] Jung, 482.

[125] Ibid., 431. Compare Janus's words to Axël: "Délivre-toi. Sois ta propre victime! Consacre-toi sur les brasiers d'amour de la Science-auguste pour y mourir, en ascète, de la mort des phénix" (Axël, 200). Maier's discovery that the end result of his alchemical investigations was literature recalls the passage in Yeats's Introduction to A Vision in which he records that the "communicators," the sources of the automatic writing which form the base for A Vision "have come to give [him] metaphors for poetry" (A Vision, 8).

[126] Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, "Hamlet," in Oeuvres complètes, XI, 99-100.

[127] A.W. Raitt points out that Villiers theorized relatively little on the subject of aesthetics. In fact, Raitt says,

> ce qui le sépare le plus de Mallarmé c'est le fait que pour celui-ci la méditation sur l'esthétique était tout, alors que pour Villiers ce n'était rien. Partant tous deux d'une philosophie idéaliste, Mallarmé se lança tout de suite dans un développement esthétique très complexe, tandis que Villiers attachait la plus grande importance aux enquêtes d'ordre métaphysique et considérait l'esthétique comme sujet stérile et même trivial. (Raitt, 43)

Nevertheless, Villiers did write a number of articles expounding his views, including: "Philoméla, livre lyrique, par Catulle Mendès" (1863; rpt. in part as "A propos d'un livre," in Nouveaux Contes cruels et propos d'au-delà, nouvelle édition [Paris: Crès, 1923], 248-58); "Hamlet" (1867; rpt. in Chez les passants, in Oeuvres complètes, XI, 99-105); "Peintures décoratives du foyer de l'Opéra" (1874; rpt. in Chez les passants, in Oeuvres complètes, XI, 146-54); "Le Candidat, comédie en quatre actes, par Gustave Flaubert" (1874; rpt. in Chez les passants in Oeuvres complètes, XI, 140-45); "La Tentation de Saint-Antoine par Gustave Flaubert" (1874; rpt. in Chez les passants in Oeuvres complètes, XI, 155-59); "Souvenir" (1887; rpt. in Chez les passants, in Oeuvres complètes, XI, 96-98). Villiers's thoughts on aesthetics may be gleaned also from unpublished manuscript fragments gathered and printed after his death. In Reliques (Paris: Corti, 1954), for example, Pierre-Georges Castex has collected a number of fragments which include several that Castex groups together under the heading "Reflexions sur le Génie et la Noblesse" (30-58). The 1923 Crès edition of Nouveaux Contes cruels et propos d'au-delà also contains the fragments of criticism

"Sur une pièce d'Augier" (259-62). And, of course, readers can draw conclusions on Villiers's aesthetics from his creative works.

[128] Appendice, "Notes et projets," in Oeuvres complètes, XI, 270.

[129] "Peintures décoratives," 152, 153.

[130] Raitt, 52.

[131] Ibid.

[132] "A propos d'un livre," 248; also quoted by Raitt, 52-53.

[133] "Hamlet," 100.

[134] "Souvenir," 98. Villiers attributes these words to Richard Wagner, but as Raitt points out it is clear that they express Villiers's own sentiments (Raitt, 52; see the last paragraph of "Souvenir").

[135] "A propos d'un livre," 249. Compare the magician's diamond sceptre and the philosopher's stone of the alchemist.

[136] Ibid.; see also "Peintures décoratives," 153.

[137] "A propos d'un livre," 256. The reference to Vaucanson, the famous eighteenth-century French creator of automata is an interesting one that should be kept in mind when we look at L'Eve future in my Chapter Three.

[138] "A propos d'un livre," 256, 254.

[139] Papus, XX.

[140] "A propos d'un livre," 254-55; emphasis mine.

[141] "Peintures décoratives," 152.

[142] Ibid., 153.

[143] "Immortal man is the beautiful hymn of God."

[144] "Souvenir," 97.

[145] Ibid., 98.

[146] Compare the description of faith in Villiers's *Isis* (*Oeuvres complètes*, IX, 42): "la foi n'est pas une conviction, mais un acte: l'acte de s'assimiler le plus d'évidences divines possible, chacun dans le *moment* et suivant la sphère où il se trouve."

[147] Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, Appendice, "Autres Fragments," in *Oeuvres complètes*, XI, 274.

[148] "Souvenir," 98.

[149] Ibid.

[150] Papus, xi.

[151] "Peintures décoratives," 153.

[152] "Souvenir," 98. A.G. Lehmann is struck by Rémy de Gourmont's use of the word "mosaïste" to describe symbolist poetry (*The Symbolist Aesthetic in France 1885-1895*, 2nd ed. [Oxford: Blackwell, 1968], 244).

[153] *Emerald Table*, trans. by Jollivet-Castelot, 1; see also Lévi, *Dogme et rituel*, I, 116.

[154] René Wellek, *Discriminations: Further Concepts of Criticism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 113.

[155] Charles Baudelaire, *Les Fleurs du mal*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. J.-G. LeDantec, rev. Claude Pichois, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade ([Paris]: Gallimard, c1961), 11; and "Notes nouvelles sur Edgar Poe," in Edgar Allan Poe, *Nouvelles Histoires extraordinaires*, trans., Charles Baudelaire (Paris: Garnier-Flammaison, c1965), 43-44. Symbolist documents on the doctrine of correspondence are included in Michaud, 719-42. For a discussion of Baudelaire's theory of correspondence and symbolism, see for example, Lehmann, 260-71, and Michaud, 67-78.

[156] Eric O. Johannesson, *The Novels of August Strindberg* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 206-07.

[157] Raitt, 209.

[158] "Peintures décoratives," 153. Listing the passages in which it occurs, Raitt says that Villiers uses the word "correspondance" only six times but seems to refer to the idea a bit more often (Raitt, 208-09). Although I have not conducted a thorough search for the word "correspondance" in Villiers's work, I have come across at least four more instances in which he uses it: it occurs as a noun in the passage from "Peintures décoratives" just quoted, and the extremely important passage on the rose quoted earlier from *Axël* (248), as well as in verbal and adjectival form in the following passages: "il [M. Bénédict d'Allepraine, poète] s'était, de très bonne heure--et ceci grâce à des instincts natals--détaché de bien des ambitions, de bien des désirs, et ne reconnaissait, pour méritant le titre de sérieux, que ce qui correspondait aux goûts sagement divins de son âme" ("L'Amour sublime," in *Propos d'au-delà* in *Oeuvres complètes*, XI, 28); "Les visions enivrantes, mélancoliques, orgueilleuses, semi-divines, se brodent sur le crépuscule des nuits orientales, évoquées aux regards parfois éperdus d'Antoine. Elles défilent, objectivées par son cerveau bouillonnant, et vitalisées par la substance correspondante dont dispose l'Enfer en éveil autour de lui." ("*La Tentation*," 156).

[159] Raitt, 209.

[160] Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, "L'Avertissement," in *Chez les passants*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, XI, 222, 224; "Le Tzar et les Grands-Ducs," in *L'Amour suprême*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, V, 195.

[161] Axël actually asks Sara if the rose "t'inspirait" (249).

[162] T.S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," in *The Sacred Word: Essays on Poetry and Criticism* (London: Methuen, 1920; rpt., 1960), 47-59.

[163] Raitt, 209-11.

[164] Lévi defines imagination and writes about its importance: "Ce qu'on appelle en nous l'imagination n'est que la propriété inhérente à notre âme de s'assimiler les images et les reflets contenus dans la lumière vivante," and

> L'Intelligence et la volonté de l'homme sont des instruments d'une portée et d'une force incalculables.
>
> Mais l'intelligence et la volonté ont pour auxiliaire et pour instrument une faculté trop peu connue et dont la toute puissance appartient exclusivement au domaine de la magie: je veux parler de l'imagination, que les cabalistes appellent le diaphane ou le translucide.
>
> L'imagination, en effet, est comme l'oeil de l'âme, et c'est en elle que se dessinent et se conservent les formes, c'est par elle que nous voyons les reflets du monde invisible, elle est le miroir des visions et l'appareil de la vie magique: c'est par elle que nous guérissons les maladies, que nous influençons les saisons, que nous écartons la mort des vivants et que nous ressuscitons les morts, parce que c'est elle qui exalte la volonté et qui lui donne prise sur l'agent universel. (*Dogme et rituel*, I, 167, 117)

[165] Jung, 167, trans. from the Latin of the *Rosarium philosophorum*.

[166] Jung, 282-83.

[167] Compare Albertus Magnus's admonition in *Libellus de alchimia*:

> I, therefore, the least of the Philosophers, purpose to write for my associates and friends the true art, clear and free from error; however, in such a way that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand. Therefore, I beg and I adjure you by the Creator of the world to hide this book from all the foolish. For to you I shall reveal the secret, but from the others I shall conceal the secret of secrets because of envy of this noble knowledge. Fools look down upon it because they cannot attain it; for this reason they consider it odious and believe it impossible; they are, therefore, envious of those who work in it and say that they are forgers. Beware, then of revealing to anyone our secrets in this work.

(From *Libellus de alchimia ascribed to Albertus Magnus*, trans. by Sister Virginia Heines, S.C.N., [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958]; rpt. in *A Source Book in Medieval Science*, ed. Edward Grant [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974], 588)

[168] W.B. Yeats, "What is 'Popular Poetry'?" in *Essays and Introductions*, 6.

[169] Ibid.

[170] Ibid., 8.

[171] "Hamlet," 104.

[172] Mallarmé, "Villiers," 492.

[173] Rémy de Gourmont, "Notes sur Villiers de l'Isle-Adam," *Mercure de France* (août, 1890), 259. See Raitt, 145-46, for further evidence of Villiers's belief in the power of words.

[174] Victor-Emile Michelet, *Villiers de l'Isle-Adam*, Nos Maîtres (Paris: Librairie Hermétique, 1910), 50.

[175] Compare Lévi: "Toute forme est le voile d'un verbe, parce que l'idée mère du verbe est l'unique raison d'être des formes. Toute figure est un caractère, tout caractère appartient et retourne à un verbe" (*Dogme et rituel*, I, 116).

[176] Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, "Les Filles de Milton," in *Propos d'au-delà*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, XI, 51-52.

[177] Drougard, "Villiers . . . et Eliphas Lévi," 530.

[178] Lévi, *Dogme et rituel*, I, 2, 4-6. See also I, 103-04, 125; II, 197; and passim.

[179] Lévi, *Dogme et rituel*, I, 116.

[180] Writing about his poem *Hérodiade* in a letter to Villiers, Mallarmé describes the nature of poetry as he sees it: "En un mot, le sujet de mon oeuvre est la Beauté, et le sujet apparent n'est qu'un prétexte pour aller vers Elle. C'est, je crois, le mot sur la Poésie" (in Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, *Correspondance générale*, ed. Joseph Bollery, 2 vols. [Paris]: Mercure de France, 1942), I, 81. Villiers must have agreed completely.

[181] "Les Filles de Milton," 50. There are many striking similarities between the veil and the rose. Both simultaneously represent the two opposing worlds of the senses and of the ideal. As with the veil, the object, the surface reality of the rose serves to evoke the ideal, the transcendent reality, and although the physical aspect of Sara's rose does not endure (the rose dies), its meaning, the impression it creates, its symbolic and artistic power lives on.

[182] Compare the passage in a letter to Mallarmé in which Villiers describes his own struggles with the intractibility of language.

> je ne puis m'exprimer que par gloussements informes qui n'ont aucun rapport avec les nuits idéales sans bornes et incréées que j'ai l'honneur de porter dans le coeur de mon coeur, je suis obligé de suer comme un nègre pour dire un iota de plus, par conscience, dans mes misérables phrases. (*Correspondance*, I, 99)

[183] "Hamlet," 99. Compare Mallarmé's famous description of how poetry should work:

> *Nommer* un objet, c'est supprimer les trois quarts de la jouissance du poème qui est faite de deviner peu à peu: le suggérer, voilà le rêve. C'est le parfait usage de ce mystère qui constitue le symbole: évoquer petit à petit un objet pour montrer un état d'âme, ou, inversement, choisit un objet et en dégager un état d'âme, par une série de déchiffrements.

("Réponses à des enquêtes sur l'évolution littéraire," in *Oeuvres complètes*, 869.) Alchemists and other occultists stress the importance of silence. See, for example, Albertus Magnus's insistence that "The first precept is that the worker in this art must be silent and secretive and reveal his secret to no one, knowing full well that if many know, the secret in no way will be kept, and that when it is divulged, it will be repeated with error. Thus it will be lost, and the work will remain imperfect" (Grant, 590). Jollivet-Castelot also writes about the necessity for silence (91), as does Lévi: "SAVOIR, OSER, VOULOIR, SE TAIRE, voilà les quatre verbes du mage qui sont écrits dans les quatre formes symboliques du sphinx" (*Dogme et rituel*, I, 109).

[184] Bürgisser, 44.

[185] Ibid., 29-30. Bürgisser describes Villiers's aesthetic at some length (see 27-34).

[186] Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, "L'Elu des rêves," in Propos d'au-delà, in Oeuvres complètes, XI, 10.

[187] Ibid., 12.

[188] Bürgisser, 51.

[189] Appendice, "Autres Fragments," Oeuvres complètes, XI, 274.

[190] Edmund Wilson, Axel's Castle: A Study in the Imaginative Literature of 1870-1930 (New York: Scribner's, c1931, 1959), 264. Wilson specifically mentions Pater's Marius, Laforgue's Lohengrin and Salomé, Mallarmé's Hamlet (in "Igitur") and Huysmans's Des Esseintes.

[191] Peter Brooks, "The Rest is Silence: Hamlet as Decadent," Jules Laforgue: Essays on a Poet's Life and Work, ed. Warren Ramsey (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, c1969), 97. The Mallarmé sonnet begins "Mes bouquins refermés sur le nom de Paphos," (Oeuvres complètes, 76). Villiers had a strong interest in Hamlet, as his article on him suggests. He also associated him with Axël. In the manuscript draft for his lecture on Axël he comments that his play was not designed for the stage:

> C'est assez vous dire que le drame d'Axël n'est nullement écrit pour la scène et que la seule idée de sa représentation semble, à l'auteur lui-même, à peu près inadmissible.
>
> Il ne saurait offrir, en réalité, qu'un intérêt de lecture,--et à ceux-là seuls encore qui, malgré l'immense convenu de la mode, ne considèrent pas uniquement comme une longueur le monologue célèbre de Hamlet, "Etre ou n'être pas."

(From holograph facsimile, Appendice, Oeuvres, ed. Bornecque.) The reference to Hamlet obviously pleased Villiers, for he repeated it in a comment in the Second Part of Axël when it appeared in La Jeune France (December 1, 1885). After a stage direction he wrote:

> Est-il nécessaire de dire, ici, que cet ouvrage, malgré la forme dialoguée et les termes scéniques, n'a jamais été conçu ni écrit pour le théâtre, pour un théâtre ou le "monologue," de Hamlet: "Etre ou n'être pas," n'est plus qu'une "longueur"? Axel est une sorte de poëme dramatique, rien de plus."
>
> (Quoted in E. Drougard, "L'Axël," 530n.)

[192] Wilson, 265-66.

[193] Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, "Génie, héroisme, noblesse," Reliques, 50.

[194] "Hamlet," 99.

[195] "A propos d'un livre," 255-56.

[196] Ibid., 255n.

[197] Raitt, 51.

[198] Jean-Paul Gourevitch, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam ou l'univers de la trangression, Ecrivains d'Hier et d'Aujourd'hui, 35 (Paris: Seghers, c1971), 54-55.

[199] Stéphane Mallarmé, "Le Livre, instrument spirituel," in Oeuvres complètes, 378.

[200] "Génie, héroisme, noblesse," 50.

[201] See Lehmann, 229-47 et passim.

[202] Ibid., 229.

[203] Raitt, 127-29. Villiers held long discussions with Georges about the question of music in Axël but at Villiers's death the details had not been settled. For the 1894 production, Georges composed the music without any of Villiers's themes (see Raitt, 129).

[204] Rodolphe Palgen, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam: auteur dramatique (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1925), 61-62. I disagree with Palgen's judgment that Villiers was unconscious of what he was doing.

[205] There is an unresolved conflict between the desire for a secret art for an elite and this social role of art. See Lehmann, 237-41, for a discussion of this problem in symbolist art. In the work of Villiers and Yeats there is an intimate link between the elite and the peasant or servant class. The artists, drawing their strength from roots sunk in the ground of the folk, aim at transfor-

ming society. The problem is that the positivist bourgeoisie defies reform: Kaspar, like Yeats's Paudeen, has his hand in the greasy till. See Yeats's description of the establishment by "the counting-house" of "a new class and a new art without breeding and without ancestry." This class and its art have come "between the hut and the castle, and between the hut and the cloister" ("What is 'Popular Poetry'?" 10-11).

[206] Bürgisser, 34. I have substituted the more general "Idéale" for the "Dieu" of the original.

[207] Lehmann, 229.

[208] Ibid.

[209] Stéphane Mallarmé, "Autobiographie," in Oeuvres complètes 662-63; emphasis mine. Quoted in part in Lehmann, 246n, and in Michaud, 757.

[210] Lehmann, 230.

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

[1] Preface to *Axël*, 7.

[2] "The Symbolism of Poetry," 162.

[3] Rose, 253.

[4] Richard J. Finneran, *The Prose Fiction of W.B. Yeats: The Search for "Those Simple Forms,"* New Yeats Papers, 4 (Dublin: The Dolmen Press, 1973), 23 et passim.

[5] See, for example, "Regina, Regina Pigmeorum, Veni" in *The Celtic Twilight*, in *Mythologies* (London: Macmillan, 1959). Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations from *The Celtic Twilight* are from this edition. In "Yeats's Revisions in *The Celtic Twilight*, 1912-1925," *Tulane Studies in English*, 20 (1972), Richard J. Finneran concludes that the text in *Mythologies* is the definitive one (98-99).

[6] Yeats still thought enough of *The Island of Statues* in 1889 to reprint the third scene of Act II in *The Wanderings of Oisin*, but aside from individual lyrics excerpted from the play, he never again republished it and chose to exclude it from both his *Collected Poems* and *Collected Plays*.

[7] *Letters*, 87.

[8] With R.P. Blackmur I would point out that, "Dialectic has nothing to do with Hegel. By dialectic is meant: the reasonable conversation of the mind which has an eye to truth in ideas." ("The Lion and the Honeycomb," in *The Lion and the Honeycomb: Essays in Solicitude and Critique* [New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, c1955], 177).

[9] *A Vision*, 271.

[10] Sister M. Bernetta Quinn, *The Metamorphic Tradition in Modern Poetry* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1955), 207.

Sister Bernetta devotes the final chapter of her work to metamorphosis in Yeats's writings. She provides a good introduction to the topic, covering much of the same ground as I do. The scope and emphases of our studies are different, however. Although I refer to Sister Bernetta's work a number of times, I do not document all our points of concurrence, nor all instances when we draw on the same Yeats material.

[11] The Christian setting is established by references to the ancient god Pan now gone, to the "new god" who has replaced him and to St. Joseph's image. See W.B. Yeats *The Island of Statues: An Arcadian Faery Tale -- in Two Acts*, in *The Variorum Edition of the Plays of W.B. Yeats*, ed. Russell K. Alspach, assisted by Catherine C. Alspach (London: Macmillan, 1966), 1236, 1255, 1257. Hereafter, the variorum edition of Yeats's plays is cited as *Plays*.

[12] W.B. Yeats, *The Celtic Twilight* (London: A.H. Bullen, 1912), 14. This is the original (1893) edition, reprinted with additions, 1902 and 1912. It is the last edition in which this and a number of other passages containing strongly "Celtic" elements appear (see Finneran, "Yeats's Revisions," 99).

[13] Compare Axël, whom Kaspar calls "*le Chasseur Noir*!" (*Axël*, 115). He is presented to the audience and announced with hunting horns before he arrives on stage in hunting gear. See, for example, *Axël*, 62, 71, 72, 113, 114.

[14] Enid Starkie, *From Gautier to Eliot: The Influence of France on English Literature 1851-1939* (London: Hutchinson University Library, c1960), 89, 122. The spelling of Tír-na-n-Og, like that of all Gaelic words, varies greatly when transliterated into English. Villiers was a Breton. Although Yeats's only real claim to Celtic blood was, possibly, through his grandfather Pollexfen who "belonged to some younger branch of an old Cornish family" (*Autobiographies*, 9), he nonetheless considered himself a Celt. See, for example, "The Irish National Literary Society," published originally in *The Boston Pilot*, Nov. 19, 1892, and reprinted in *Letters to the New Island*, ed. Horace Reynolds (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1934), 153-59: "Your Celt" is Yeats himself. The Celtic influence on Yeats is obvious; in Villiers it is a more subtle but nonetheless pervasive undercurrent which surfaces on occasion in works like "L'Intersigne," set in part in a small Breton village. John Charpentier sees Villiers as "l'expression même de la renaissance de l'âme celtique" (*Le Symbolisme*, 82, quoted in Pauly, 25). Goldgar attributes not only Villiers's philosophic idealism and artistic romanticism at least in part to his Breton origins, but also "son attachement à l'Eglise et au Roi, sa fidélité aux traditions et à sa race,

son orgueil d'aristocrate, son attrait pour toute idée noble." (Goldgar, Deux Dramaturges, 197). See also Théophile Briant, "L'Inspiration bretonne dans l'oeuvre de Villiers de l'Isle Adam [sic]," Bretagne, 17^{e} année, no. 163 (août, 1938), 240-46.

[15] Rose, 253. Yeats's early adulthood was marked by a romantic withdrawal from public life. After meeting Maud Gonne in 1889, however, he became active in politics and various national affairs; then as the relationship with the very public Miss Gonne soured, Yeats participated less and less in politics. Later there was a fourth stage in his public involvement as he came to realize that withdrawal was for him neither desirable nor possible: "A sixty-year-old smiling public man" (Poems, 443), he found himself once more in his life and poetry actively engaged in politics.

[16] W.B. Yeats, ed., Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry (London: Walter Scott, 1888); rpt. in W.B. Yeats, ed., Fairy and Folk Tales of Ireland (Gerrards Cross, Bucks.: Colin Smythe, 1973), 11. In other works, Yeats usually uses the variant spelling Tuatha De Danaan. See, for example, Appendix I, Notes to Poems, 796.

[17] Michael J. Sidnell, George P. Mayhew, David R. Clark, eds., Druid Craft: The Writing of The Shadowy Waters, Manuscripts of W.B. Yeats, Vol. 1, ed. David R. Clark (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1971), 35.

[18] Ibid. In The Celtic Realms (New York: New American Library, c1967), Myles Dillon and Nora K. Chadwick divide the ancient Irish gods into three main groups: the older Celtic gods imported from Gaul; the native Irish chthonic gods who dwell in the burial mounds; and the gods of re-birth associated primarily with the sea. By the time the stories about the gods were written down by the Christian monks, the gods were regarded as beings of the far past. All three groups were mixed together under the same epithet: the Tuatha De Danaan (Dillon and Chadwick, 143, 146). This long-standing blurring of boundaries between categories of divinities is reflected in Yeats's work where matters are further complicated by his habit of combining the old written tradition on the gods with more recent popular or folk tradition. In thus combining the two traditions, Yeats was simply continuing what Diane Elizabeth Bessai describes as "a characteristically Irish creative habit of mind: the making of a new synthesis out of traditional material" ("Sovereignty of Erin: A Study of Mythological Motif in the Irish Literary Revival," Diss. University of London 1971, 12). As Yeats himself remarks in the 1912 edition of The Celtic Twilight, "Legend mixes everything together in her cauldron" (117n).

[19] *Fairy and Folk Tales*, 12. In a note to "Regina, Regina Pigmeorum, Veni" Yeats elaborates: "The people and faeries in Ireland are sometimes as big as we are, sometimes bigger, and sometimes, as I have been told, about three feet high. The old Mayo woman I so often quote thinks that it is *something in our eyes* that makes them seem big or little" (*The Celtic Twilight*, 55n; emphasis mine).

[20] See, for example, "The Tribes of Danu," *The New Review* (Nov. 1897); rpt. *Uncollected Prose*, II, 57-58.

[21] In his Preface to Lady Gregory's *Gods and Fighting Men*, Yeats notes that "These [Celtic] gods are indeed more wise and beautiful than men; but men, when they are great men, are stronger than they are, for men are, as it were, the foaming tide-line of their sea" (Preface to *Gods and Fighting Men*, arranged by Lady Gregory [London: John Murray, 1904]; rpt. in *Explorations*, 23.

[22] See *The Celtic Twilight* and *Fairy and Folk Tales*, passim. In the latter volume, see especially Yeats's notes and the "Classification of Irish Fairies," in *Irish Fairy Tales*, 383-87. *Irish Fairy Tales*, ed. W.B. Yeats was originally published by Unwin, 1892.

[23] *The Celtic Twilight*, 78.

[24] Ibid., 37.

[25] This failure of the new god to protect Naschina is an ironic reversal of the earlier failure of the old gods to accept and protect Almintor. He appeals to Pan to guide his choice of flowers and asks

> If I speak low,
> And not clear, how will the new god know
> But that I called on him?

Apparently the new god's hearing was better than Almintor thought.

[26] *The Celtic Twilight*, 70.

[27] It would seem that on occasion and under certain circumstances, faery immortality may be cast off even before the Last Judgment. Thus Yeats reports that "Blake saw a fairy's funeral" (*Fairy and Folk Tales*, 12), and in "The Priest and the Fairy," he writes that a fairy was buried late in a hazel dell" (*Poems*, 729); thus the enchantress of the Island of Statues "Faded and vanished" (*Plays*, 1255); thus, too, Clooth-na-Bare, a once mortal woman who tired of her faery life,

drowned herself in "the deepest water in the world in little Lough Ia" (The Celtic Twilight, 79; Appendix I, Notes to Poems, 801). "The Untiring Ones," in The Celtic Twilight, records the story of a mortal child chosen to be the wife of a faery prince and given the immortality of faery life as long as a log taken from her mother's fire remained unconsumed. She outlived seven faery husbands, each of whom lived seven hundred years. Finally the parish priest, concerned that she had become a scandal because of her many husbands, released the woman from her immortality by finding the log and burning it: "she died, and was buried like a Christian, and everybody was pleased" (The Celtic Twilight, 78-79).

[28] See Fairy and Folk Tales, 179.

[29] Dillon and Chadwick, 150. Dillon and Chadwick enthrone the ancient sea god Manannán mac Lir as king of Tír-na-n-Og (150). Yeats replaces him with the younger god of love, Aengus, although Manannán's presence is still felt on The Island of Victories in Part II of "The Wanderings of Oisin." See Poems, 16, var. 1.217; 38.

[30] Compare Axël and L'Eve future. The final transformation that transports Sara and Axël to the Ideal takes place in the Auërsperg family crypt beneath the castle. In L'Eve future, the domain of Hadaly, representative of the Ideal, is located in subterranean Indian burial vaults beneath Edison's laboratory. The "antiques obituaires" have been transformed by Edison into "L'Eden Sous Terre": "c'est un peu le royaume de la féerie." (See L'Eve, 176, 179ff.) In A Vision, Yeats discusses the symbolism of the cavern which is related to that of the underground burial place. It is, he says, "identified in the Hermetic Fragments with the Heavens" which in turn "were the orbit of the stars and planets, the source of all calendars, the symbol of the soul's birth and rebirth" (A Vision, 259; emphasis mine).

[31] W.B. Yeats, "The Celtic Element in Literature," in Ideas of Good and Evil (London: Bullen, 1903); rpt. in Essays and Introductions, 173.

[32] Ibid., 178.

[33] Ibid., 173. Allen R. Grossman observes that "an acknowledged mark of Celticism in contrast to the earlier Romantic movement was its claim to ultimate primitiveness" (Poetic Knowledge in the Early Yeats [Charlottesville, Va.: University of Virginia Press, 1969], 51). Yeats surmised that what he had as a young man regarded, like Renan and Arnold, as the "Celtic element" in literature and life was something common to all "the ancient peoples of the world"

(*The Celtic Twilight*, 1912, 13n). "The Celtic Element in Literature" examines just this hypothesis. In the 1902 and 1912 editions of *The Celtic Twilight*, commenting on a sentence concerning the "inmost voice of Celtic sadness," Yeats remarked "I wrote this sentence long ago. This sadness now seems to me a part of all peoples who preserve the moods of the ancient peoples of the world. I am not so preoccupied with the mystery of Race as I used to be, but leave this sentence and other sentences like it unchanged. We once believed them, and have, it may be, not grown wiser" (*The Celtic Twilight*, 1912, 13n). Later, both the footnote and the sentence it referred to were removed as, after the 1912 edition, Yeats revised out of the work much of what Richard J. Finneran describes as "the heavily 'Celtic' nature of the earlier editions" ("Yeats's Revisions," 99). It is interesting to note in the present context that Yeats associated the Celtic movement with the symbolist movement. He closed his essay on "The Celtic Element in Literature" with a description of the artistic climate at the end of the nineteenth century. The "imagination of the world" was ripe, Yeats tells us, "for a new intoxication":

> The reaction against the rationalism of the eighteenth century has mingled with a reaction against the materialism of the nineteenth century, and the symbolical movement, which has come to perfection in Germany in Wagner, in England in the Pre-Raphaelites, in France in Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, and Mallarmé, and in Belgium in Maeterlinck, and has stirred the imagination of Ibsen and D'Annunzio, is certainly the only movement that is saying new things. The arts by brooding upon their own intensity have become religious, and are seeking, as I think Verhaeren has said, to create a sacred book. (187)

[34] "The Celtic Element in Literature," 178.

[35] See J[ohn] A[rnott] MacCulloch, "Metamorphosis," Hastings, VIII, 593. Yeats knew and used the Hastings *Encyclopaedia*, which he purchased with his Nobel Prize money (see Harper and Hood, Notes, 36).

[36] "The Celtic Element in Literature," 174.

[37] Ibid., 173. Yeats is quoting Renan.

[38] "Gods and Fighting Men," 24.

[39] "The Celtic Element in Literature," 178. Compare the underlying alchemical transformation in *Axël*.

[40] *Fairy and Folk Tales*, 11. Compare Yeats's description of the Pooka who is "essentially an animal spirit," and "has many shapes," since, "Like all spirits, he is only half in the world of form" (*Fairy and Folk Tales*, 87).

[41] Ibid., 287. The queen of the faeries who appears to Yeats and his friends in "Regina, Regina Pigmeorum, Veni," when asked if any of the faeries are "ever born into mortal life" replies yes and that Yeats himself knows some "who were among [her] people before birth" (*The Celtic Twilight*, 56).

[42] Sister M. Bernetta Quinn points not only to pagan Celtic myth, but also theosophy and the eastern influence of Brahmin Mohini Chatterji as sources for Yeats's theme of transmigration. See Quinn, 227-28, and Grossman, 135-36. Yeats himself acknowledges Chatterji's influence in the poem "Mohini Chatterjee," (*Poems*, 495-96). Kathleen Raine attributes Yeats's inability to accept the christian church, despite his "deeply religious" nature, to his belief in rebirth:

> from the theosophy and the Cabbalistic studies of the Order of the Golden Dawn, from Plato and Plotinus and "out of a medium's mouth", from the Noh plays of Japan and the Tibetan *Book of the Dead*, to the Vedas, Yeats gathered all the knowledge he could of the soul's history, of that hidden phase of our single human experience which follows death and precedes birth.

(Kathleen Raine, *Death-in-Life and Life-in-Death: "Cuchulain Comforted" And "News for the Delphic Oracle,"* New Yeats Papers, 8 [Dublin: The Dolmen Press, 1974], 13.) Yeats's interest in reincarnation in the early period of his career anticipates the theory of personal and historical cycles propounded later in *A Vision*. In "Under Ben Bulben," his "own last poetic declaration of faith" (Raine, *Death-in-Life*, 14), Yeats warns us that he will be back:

> Many times man lives and dies
> Between his two eternities,
> That of race and that of soul,
> And ancient Ireland knew it all.
> (*Poems*, 637; quoted in Raine, *Death-in-Life*, 14)

[43] Compare Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*. The Button Moulder informs Peer that his soul must go into the casting-ladle to be melted down with other souls, then re-cast:

> you were meant to be a shining button
> On the waistcoat of the world. But your loop broke.
> So you must be thrown into the rubbish bin,
> And go from there back into the great pool.

(Henrik Ibsen, Peer Gynt, trans. Michael Meyer [Garden City, N.J.: Anchor-Doubleday, n.d.], 140; I have omitted the brackets in the text that indicate cuts made for the 1962 production of the play at the Old Vic.)

[44] Sister M. Bernetta Quinn says the faery man is "probably Aengus" (Quinn, 210); this is an understandable mistake given the state of Edain's marital relationships. In the 1906 version of The Shadowy Waters Yeats includes a passage which seems to support Quinn's reading of the faery man as Aengus:

> Twas Aengus and Edain, the wandering lovers,
> To whom all lovers pray. . . .
> My mother told me that there is not one
> Of the Ever-living half so dangerous
> As that wild Aengus. Long before her day
> He carried Edain off from a king's house,
> And hid her among fruits of jewel-stone
> And in a tower of glass. (Poems, 224)

When, however, this passage is taken in conjunction with "The Harp of Aengus," the poem that serves as epilogue to the play, it appears that the "king" from whom Aengus took Edain "long before her day" was the faery king, Midhir, not the mortal king Eochaid, as Sister Bernetta's reading would require.

[45] Dillon and Chadwick, 150.

[46] W.B. Yeats, "The Broken Gates of Death," Fortnightly Review (April, 1898); rpt. in Uncollected Prose, II, 107.

[47] Dillon and Chadwick, 149-50.

[48] Yeats confessed, "I am orthodox and pray for a resurrection of the body" (Discoveries, in Essays and Introductions, 297).

[49] Fairy and Folk Tales, 60.

[50] W.B. Yeats, Dhoya, in John Sherman and Dhoya, ed. Richard J. Finneran (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1969), 121.

[51] The Celtic Twilight, 114.

[52] Yeats considered the Druids to be so closely associated with the ancient Irish gods that he often used "Druid" as synonymous with "faery." See, for example, "To Ireland in the Coming Times": "Ah,

faeries, dancing under the moon,/A Druid land, a Druid tune!" (*Poems*, 139).

[53] *The Celtic Twilight*, 7.

[54] Like much that is connected with metamorphosis, fire plays multiple and what often appear to be contradictory roles. The "noblest of the elements" (*Fairy and Folk Tales*, 191) because it "burns up everything, and where there is nothing, there is God" (*The Secret Rose*, in *Mythologies*, 185), fire is associated with apparitions of the faery folk ("The Tribes of Danu," 59-60) and is, according to Grossman, "an attribute of the sidhe in its masculine form" (Grossman, 108). Yet, as Sister M. Bernetta Quinn points out, fire is also the element used by the peasants to ward off the faeries (see Quinn, 208). According to Giraldus Cambrensis, fire is "the greatest of enemies to every sort of phantom" (*Fairy and Folk Tales*, 191). Some aspects of the symbolism of fire will be discussed later in this chapter. Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations from *The Secret Rose* are from *Mythologies*.

[55] See *Poems*, 800. In the same note, Yeats also states that the epithet "Sidhe" derives "from Aes Sidhe or Sluagh Sidhe, the people of the Faery Hills" or *síd*-mounds referred to by Dillon and Chadwick: the barrows of the dead.

[56] Regardie, I, 27. Regardie discusses the Qabalistic Tree of Life and its ten Sephiroth in Vol. I, 23-30. See also Raine, *Tarot*, passim.

[57] Grossman, 54.

[58] Grossman, 54-55, quoting *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, ed. Whitehead (1898), Book I, Chapter VI, 44. Compare the alchemist's "humide radicale" which unites *sol* and *luna*, the masculine and feminine principles (see my Chapter One, 20. Grossman devotes Chapter III to wind (and reed) symbolism in *The Wind Among the Reeds* (Grossman, 43-62).

[59] Grossman, 89.

[60] Grossman, 119. The poem in *The Wind Among the Reeds* entitled "Michael Robartes asks Forgiveness because of his Many Moods" was originally published as "The Twilight of Forgiveness" (1895). From 1906 on, it appears as "The Lover asks Forgiveness because of his Many Moods."

[61] Quinn, 5.

[62] "The Autumn of the Body," 192.

[63] "The Symbolism of Poetry," 162.

[64] "The Autumn of the Body," 192-93.

[65] Quinn, 223.

[66] See Richard Ellmann, The Identity of Yeats, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 70. See also The Shadowy Waters, in Poems, 747, 754. Forgael "has a silver lily embroidered over his breast" and Dectora has a rose on hers. Robert M. Schuler looks at this poem from the point of view of alchemical symbolism and comes to quite different conclusions, especially regarding the second stanza: "the speaker wishes to avoid thinking of the alchemist's ideal because he does not wish to submit himself to the necessary destruction." See Robert M. Schuler, "W.B. Yeats: Artist or Alchemist?" Review of English Studies, N.S., 22, No. 85 (1971), 44-45.

[67] Cirlot, 27.

[68] The Celtic Twilight, 115. See also "Baile and Aillinn," Poems, 188, var. footnote to title.

[69] The Celtic Twilight, 1912, 61. On the Fomoroh, see Appendix I, Notes to Poems, 795; "The Tribes of Danu," 58, 58n.

[70] "The Autumn of the Body," 189, 192. Yeats felt "a time of scientific and political thought" had brought this externality to literature.

[71] Letters, 402.

[72] Ibid., 88.

[73] See "The Autumn of the Body."

[74] Ibid., 189, 190.

[75] W.B. Yeats, "Swedenborg, Mediums, and the Desolate Places," in Explorations, 37. See Axël, 36. This quotation was a favourite

of Yeats; the phrase or a modification of it recurs throughout Yeats's work, including in *Per Amica Silentia Lunae*, 347; *A Vision*, 139; *The Resurrection*, in *Plays*, 919; and Appendix I, Notes to *Poems*, 824.

[76] See also *The Celtic Twilight*, 116. In *Yeats and Magic: The Earlier Works*, Irish Literary Studies, 2 (Gerrards Cross, Bucks.: Colin Smythe, 1977), Mary Catherine Flannery gives credit to Madame Blavatsky's *Isis Unveiled* as the first written statement of correspondences encountered by Yeats.

[77] *A Vision*, 197.

[78] In a footnote to the action of the gyres, Yeats refers to the passage in *The Hour-Glass*. See *A Vision*, 210.

[79] Drawing on Louis Herbert Gray, *The Mythology of All Races*, Vol. III (New York: Marshall Jones, 1918), 169, Sister M. Bernetta Quinn notes that Bran, Sceolan and Lomair are Oisin's cousins, who have been transformed into hounds (Quinn, 215).

[80] See Appendix I, Notes to *Poems*, 794; and *The Celtic Twilight*, 115.

[81] Quinn, 209.

[82] These images from "The Wanderings of Oisin" recur, for example, in "He mourns for the change that has come upon him and his Beloved, and longs for the End of the World" (*Poems*, 153) and in *The Shadowy Waters* (*Poems*, 764). Sister M. Bernetta Quinn cites the "metamorphic pursuit," illustrated by such images as the hound and deer as "an example of the Grecian-urn theme: love as frustration, yet never--in constrast to love as it exists outside art--as satiety" (Quinn, 218).She hints in this passage that the image is not a totally positive one, that quenchless desire, simply because it is denied fulfilment, may end in frustration; this in turn may lead to the longing for death and the final destruction of the universe pictured in "He mourns for the change. . . ." See Quinn, 218.

[83] See "When You are Old," with its very non-Ronsardian line, "But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you" (*Poems*, 121).

[84] See *Plays*, 1247. Compare the death associated with Sara and her rose: in one manuscript fragment of *Axël*, Sara describes how she killed "je ne sais quel jeune seigneur" in the woods and brought her dying rose back to life with his blood (*Axël*, 280).

[85] In the Epilogue to Per Amica Silentia Lunae Yeats tells Iseult Gonne ("Dear Maurice") that when he saw Axël staged in 1894, he waited with impatience for the moment when he would hear these words (368). Yeats was so struck by the phrase that he used it almost like a motto for a time and "in cheerful youth" inscribed it when autographing his books (see W.B. Yeats and T. Sturge Moore: Their Correspondence 1901-1937, ed. Ursula Bridge [London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1953], 132 ; hereafter cited as Bridge). The phrase serves as epigraph to The Secret Rose (144) and also occurs in Autobiographies (305) and Discoveries (296).

[86] "A Symbolical Drama in Paris," 324. In The Celtic Twilight, Yeats asks, "What else can death be but the beginning of wisdom and power and beauty?" (115).

[87] "The Tribes of Danu," 57.

[88] The Celtic Twilight, 63-64.

[89] See Poems, 46; l, var. title.

[90] Fairy and Folk Tales, 383.

[91] See W.B. Yeats, Stories of Red Hanrahan, (Dundrum: The Dun Emer Press, 1904 [1905]; rpt. in Mythologies, 221, 256. Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations from the Hanrahan stories are from Mythologies. In The Unicorn: William Butler Yeats' Search for Reality (New York: Macmillan, 1954), Virginia Moore describes the "four Celtic element-symbols" which were to have been important in the Irish Myteries Yeats and Maud Gonne planned: "the Lía Fail, or Stone of Destiny, which when touched by a rightful King of Ireland cried praise; the inexhaustible Caldron of the Dagda; the Sword of Nuada, from the cut of which no one recovered; and the self-directed Spear of Lug" (58-59).

[92] The Secret Rose, 189.

[93] Ibid., 187.

[94] The Celtic Twilight, 98. Oisin's dusky demon, Dhoya's faery man, Fergus' Druid, for example, all shift shapes to avoid being overcome by mortals; Almintor and the other Sleepers on the Island of Statues are transformed into stone when they trespass on the faery island.

[95] W.B. Yeats, The Speckled Bird, ed. William H. O'Donnell, Yeats Studies ([Toronto]: McClelland and Stewart, c1976), 34-35.

[96] The Druid enchantment that convinces Cuchulain that the waves of the sea have been transformed into horses is described by Sister M. Bernetta Quinn as a "private" metamorphosis in which "not only the object [the waves] is metamorphosed but also the very process (the battle)" (Quinn, 213).

[97] *Fairy and Folk Tales*, 287.

[98] *The Celtic Twilight*, 1912, 18, 144.

[99] *The Celtic Twilight*, 90.

[100] *The Secret Rose*, 189.

[101] *The Celtic Twilight*, 115.

[102] Ibid.

[103] Grossman, 36, 40.

[104] W.B. Yeats, "William Blake and his Illustrations to the *Divine Comedy*," in *Ideas of Good and Evil* (London: Bullen, 1903); rpt. in *Essays and Introductions*, 128. Compare Villiers's description of men of genius: "On ne peut les mesurer exactement. Ils échappent aux conventions sociales" (*Reliques*, 50).

[105] *The Celtic Twilight*, 115, 116.

[106] Grossman, 187.

[107] In *The Identity of Yeats*, Ellmann calls these gifts "familiar and grandiloquent" (251).

[108] Grossman (187-96) gives a rather different, but quite interesting reading of "The Cap and Bells," drawing in part for his interpretation, as I have, from "The Queen and the Fool." I would quarrel with him primarily on matters of what are perhaps minor detail. The line "Till stars grew out of the air," for instance, which I see as an indication of the appearance of stars as night approaches, Grossman reads as the *disappearance* of the stars indicative of the end of time at the Last Judgment (193). I also disagree with part of his interpretation of the image of cap and bells. He concurs with Morton Seiden that the cap and bells are a "genital symbol" but sees the gift

as a suggestion of "penitential castration" rather than a more normal sexual offer (192). I find this interpretation unwarranted, in part because I believe sexuality is represented in the poem by the "red and quivering garment" in which the jester's heart sings to the queen. What Michael J. Sidnell terms the sexual-apocalyptic theme of The Wind Among the Reeds makes sexual readings of many of the poems appropriate and necessary (see "Mr. Yeats, Michael Robartes, and Their Circle," Yeats and the Occult, ed. George Mills Harper, Yeats Studies [Toronto: Macmillan, c1975], 244). At times, however, Grossman tends to carry this a little too far. He finds, for instance, the same penitential castration in "The Hosting of the Sidhe" (Grossman, 192).

[109] The Celtic Twilight, 115.

[110] "Gods and Fighting Men," 17.

[111] Ibid., 18.

[112] Ibid.

[113] Quinn, 211.

[114] Sister M. Bernetta Quinn notes that Cuchulain's "birth is a Celtic echo of the Leda myth" (Quinn, 211).

[115] Yeats gives two separate versions of the story: one in "Cuchulain's Fight with the Sea" and one in On Baile's Strand.

[116] Quinn describes Cuchulain as a symbol of "all those who struggle hopelessly against the sorrows of the world" (Quinn, 213).

[117] W.B. Yeats, "The Play, the Player, and the Scene," Samhain (Dec., 1904); rpt. in Explorations, 168. In writing on Blake, Yeats stresses the older poet's insistence on the necessity of extravagance not only for art, but for life itself:

> Against another desire of his time, derivative also from what he has called "corporeal reason," the desire for "a tepid moderation," for a lifeless "sanity in both art and life," he had protested years before with a paradoxical violence. "The roadway of excess leads to the palace of wisdom," and we must only "bring out weight and measure in time of dearth." This protest, carried, in the

> notes on Sir Joshua Reynolds, to the point of dwelling with pleasure on the thought that "The Lives of the Painters say that Raphael died of dissipation," because dissipation is better than emotional penury, seemed as important to his old age as to his youth. He taught it to his disciples, and one finds it in its purely artistic shape in a diary written by Samuel Palmer, in 1824: "Excess is the essential vivifying spirit, vital spark. embalming spice of the finest art." ("William Blake and his Illustrations," 123)

Yeats repeats the reference to Palmer, in part, in "The Celtic Element in Literature" (184). It is interesting to note that in a letter to Olivia Shakespear written in November 1894, Yeats advised her that she could improve her novels by working on her men: "I wonder how you would fare were you to pick out some eccentric man, either from among those you know, or from literary history, from the Villiers De Lisle Adams [sic] and Verlaines, and set him to make love to your next heroine?" (Letters, 240). Villiers would have appreciated this, since he too believed extravagance was essential in life. Dante erred, he felt, in assigning the wicked to hell; only the "Médiocre" will go there because the Bible itself says, "'Si vous êtes tièdes, je vous vomirai par ma bouche'" (L'Eve, 440-41).

[118] W.B. Yeats, "Poetry and Tradition," in The Cutting of an Agate (New York: Macmillan, 1912); rpt. in Essays and Introductions, 254. Villiers acknowledges

> deux manifestations de la Race, l'homme de génie et le héros. Tous deux portent leur signe avec eux. Tous deux font la noblesse d'un pays, mais de la noblesse humaine. Par la race qui est en eux, dans l'un comme l'éclair, dans l'autre comme le flambeau, ils tiennent du feu qui purifie ce qu'il touche ou le consume. Toute action se transforme en eux et devient belle (L'Eve, 439).

[119] "Poetry and Tradition," 254-55.

[120] The Celtic Twilight, 30.

[121] I consider the converse to this transformation of life into art later in this chapter when discussing the transformation of art into life.

[122] Richard Ellmann, Yeats: The Man and the Masks (New York: Dutton, c1948), 38.

[123] Ibid., 39.

[124] See the discussion of "le Verbe" in my Chapter One, 68ff.

[125] "The Symbolism of Poetry," 158.

[126] W.B. Yeats, "The Philosophy of Shelley's Poetry," in Ideas of Good and Evil (London: Bullen, 1903); rpt. in Essays and Introductions, 65.

[127] W.B. Yeats, Discoveries, 287.

[128] See Allan Wade, A Bibliography of the Writings of W.B. Yeats, ed. Russell K. Alspach, 3rd ed. rev., The Soho Bibliographies, 1, ([London]: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1968), 83.

[129] W.B. Yeats, "First Principles," Samhain (Dec., 1904); rpt. in Explorations, 152-53.

[130] Grossman writes that poetry is "mediate between eternity and time" (73).

[131] Discoveries, 287-88.

[132] "The Symbolism of Poetry," 159.

[133] Ibid., 157. I shall discuss these aspects of art in more detail later in this chapter.

[134] In The Celtic Twilight, Yeats tells us that "If beauty is not a gateway out of the net we were taken in at our birth, it will not long be beauty" (63-64). Compare the description of Margaret's effect on Michael in The Speckled Bird: "Margaret had moved Michael so much partly because her beauty was a passionless beauty laden with a stillness and silence, a gate through which his dreams rushed into a shadowy eternity" (174). Since poetry for Yeats, as for the Irish in general "has always been mysteriously connected with magic" (Fairy and Folk Tales, 5), the poet is like the enchanter of old who could

> create or reveal for himself as well as for others the supernatural artist or genius, the seeming transitory mind made out of many minds, whose work [presented itself in imaginative visions shared in waking trances by several people]. He kept the doors, too, as it seems, of those less transitory minds, the genuis of the family, the genius of the tribe, or it may be, when he was mighty-souled enough, the genuis of the world. (W.B. Yeats, "Magic," in Ideas of Good and Evil [London: Bullen, 1903]; rpt. in Essays and Introductions, 43-44)

[135] Fairy and Folk Tales, 76, 385.

[136] Ibid., 76. Grossman makes an interesting comment on Yeats's own relationship with the Leanhuan Shee: "All of Yeats' early poetic self-images were preyed upon by 'the dreadful solitary fairy,' who symbolizes the terrors of the sublimation required by Wisdom. Niamh was of the Leanhuan Shee, Cleena who drives to madness and death Owen O'Sullivan was also, as was Maude Gonne and Ireland herself" (Grossman, 38).

[137] For typographical convenience, when quoting from this poem I remove the italics which set the modern commentary off from the ancient tale. I also remove the italics without comment in a number of other places when the entire passage quoted is in this type.

[138] On one level, the evil days are simply the days of famine and bartering with demons depicted in the play. They are also the days of life and time and change. Aleel is inviting Cathleen to Tír-na-n-Og until the time of the final cataclysm.

[139] Dillon and Chadwick, 153. Dillon and Chadwick observe that although the Irish women "were the vehicles by which the dead were reborn in generation after generation," the "human husband has no spiritual rōle" (150). This situation is not, of course, peculiar to Celtic mythology. Like Cuchulain's human "father," and Joseph of Nazareth, mortal men are frequently cast in the role of Amphitryon.

[140] The Celtic Twilight, 115.

[141] See also The Celtic Twilight, 121; "William Blake and his Illustrations to the Divine Comedy," 116; The Hour Glass in Plays, 596. In one of the fragments of L'Eve future, Edison reminds Ewald

that women differ mentally from men and have "d'autres énergies" for comprehension. A woman's mind, he says, "est toute mystérieuse d'un instinct divin" (L'Eve, 436).

[142] Like Maeve and other Irish heroines and heroes, Aoife is sometimes a mortal and sometimes a goddess (see Dillon and Chadwick, 153-55). Although in "The Grey Rock" Aoife is immortal, in On Baile's Strand she is human. Her hair is red, however, one of the two colours favoured by faeries (the second being green). The metamorphoses attributed by Fintain to Aoife's Queens are indications of man's ancient ambivalence towards women for they are signs that the Queens are witches who get their power from evil spirits and their "own malignant will" (Fairy and Folk Tales, 133). Yeats informs us in Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry that "the central notion of witchcraft everywhere is the power to change into some fictitious form, usually in Ireland a hare or a cat. Long ago a wolf was the favourite" (Fairy and Folk Tales, 134-35).

[143] Rose, 253.

[144] Ibid.

[145] The Celtic Twilight, 56. Compare Hadaly's advice to Ewald in L'Eve future. When Ewald admires the beautiful song of the nightingale and remarks that "c'est l'oeuvre de Dieu," the following exchange takes place:

> --Alors, dit-elle, admirez-la: mais ne cherchez pas à savoir comment elle se produit.
> --Quel serait le péril, si j'essayais? demanda en souriant lord Ewald.
> --Dieu se retirerait du chant! murmura tranquillement Hadaly. (L'Eve, 189)

[146] Quinn, 211. See "The Song of Wandering Aengus" and "He mourns for the change that has come upon him and his Beloved, and longs for the End of the World," in Poems, 149, 153.

[147] Discoveries, 287. The editors of Druid Craft draw attention to Yeats's "preoccupation" with "the prospect of the great cataclysm that will end creation" (108). In "The Wanderings of Oisin" they cite Poems, 16, ll.218-20; 17, l.246; 20, ll.290-91; 28, ll.424-27; 35, ll.86-87; 45, ll.235-39.

[148] The Celtic Twilight, 100.

[149] *Fairy and Folk Tales*, 385.

[150] Ibid., 76.

[151] Grossman, 36.

[152] See "The Host of the Air," in *Poems*, 145, var. l.40d; *The Celtic Twilight*, 73-74.

[153] E. Starkie, 89.

[154] Quinn outlines Yeats's references to witches and devils in connection with metamorphosis (see Quinn, 223-25).

[155] Compare the admission by Césaire Lenoir, Villiers's Hegelian in *Tribulat Bonhomet*, that however "l'Etre-Inconditionnel" may be defined, he is sure of only one thing: "j'ai PEUR de cet absolu Justicier" (*Tribulat Bonhomet*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, III, 125, 126).

[156] Yeats writes that "The paradise of the Christian . . . is but the fulfilment of one dream; but the paradise that the common people tell of about the fire . . . is the fulfilment of all dreams" ("The Literary Movement in Ireland," *North American Review* [Dec., 1899]; rpt. in *Uncollected Prose*, II, 195).

[157] *Druid Craft*, 18.

[158] Man has an almost innate and often irrational fear of the wind because it is a natural emblem of unseen destructive power. Directors of horror and suspense films are among those who have exploited the wind's capacity to "spook." In *Tribulat Bonhomet*, Villiers's title character, the epitome of Common Sense and nineteenth-century rationalism, confesses that he is subject to "une *Appréhension*, une ANXIETE sans motif précis, une AFFRE" which he cannot explain, but which is precipitated by, among other things, the wind and the "mille tressaillements du Silence" (56, 57). What he is experiencing is "le soufflement de l'Au-delà."

[159] *Druid Craft*, 19.

[160] Quoted in part in *Druid Craft*, 19.

[161] *Druid Craft*, 19.

[162] Regardie, I, 56.

[163] Ibid.; quoted in Druid Craft, 28.

[164] See my Chapter One, 28-30.

[165] Grossman applies the recognition won with such difficulty by Oisin to Yeats himself. Of the Wisdom figure, which he sees as the image of transcendence at the heart of Yeats's search for poetic knowledge in The Wind Among the Reeds, Grossman writes: "It is the seed of modernity in Yeats that no relation to the white woman could compensate him for the sacrifice of that enforced oblation," the self-sacrifice demanded of the poet (Grossman, xvii).

[166] In his Introduction to W.B. Yeats, The Celtic Twilight and a Selection of Early Poems (New York: New American Library, 1962), Walter Starkie describes "The Wanderings of Oisin" as "a first statement of what [Yeats] came in his old age to feel was the major theme of his entire work: the horror of old age that brings wisdom at the price of bodily decrepitude and death" (W. Starkie, xv).

[167] The Celtic Twilight, 139.

[168] "Poetry and Tradition," 251.

[169] "What is 'Popular Poetry'?" 4.

[170] "Gods and Fighting Men," 24.

[171] Robert O'Driscoll, Symbolism and Some Implications of the Symbolic Approach: W.B. Yeats During the Eighteen-Nineties, New Yeats Papers, 9 (Dublin: The Dolmen Press, 1975), 24.

[172] W.B. Yeats, The Secret Rose (London: Laurence and Bullen, 1897), vii; hereafter cited as The Secret Rose (1897).

[173] Ibid.

[174] The 1897 edition of The Secret Rose includes not only the series republished in modified form under the same name, but also "Rosa Alchemica" and the series which became Stories of Red Hanrahan. See Finneran, Prose (40, 41-42), for a summary of the republication history of The Secret Rose and the Hanrahan stories.

[175] *The Secret Rose* (1897), VII.

[176] Finneran, *Prose*, 18.

[177] O'Driscoll, *Symbolism*, 29. Yeats's sympathy for the brothers in "Where there is Nothing there is God" is in part explained by a passage in *Per Amica Silentia Lunae* in which he writes that he has "always sought to bring [his] mind close to the mind" of those who are themselves in communion with Anima Mundi. Among those he lists are "lay brothers whom I imagine dreaming in some mediaeval monastery the dreams of their village" (*Per Amica Silentia Lunae* [London: Macmillan, 1918]; rpt. in *Mythologies*, 343).

[178] Finneran describes "The Crucifixion of the Outcast" as "Yeats's favourite story in the collection." He cites the Wade note that Yeats had inscribed John Quinn's copy of Vol. VII of *The Collected Works in Verse and Prose* with the words: "Early stories of which 'The Crucifixion of the Outcast' is nearest my heart" (Finneran, *Prose*, 19, 34-35, quoting Wade, *Bibliography*, 91).

[179] *The Secret Rose*, 174.

[180] Ibid.

[181] In "Yeats as Adept and Artist: *The Speckled Bird*, *The Secret Rose*, and *The Wind among the Reeds*," *Yeats and the Occult*, ed. George Mills Harper, William H. O'Donnell writes that "The Heart of the Spring" is a "fictional celebration of the search for Adeptship" (62).

[182] The story originally appeared as "St. Patrick and the Pedants," in *The Weekly Sun Literary Supplement*, (Dec. 1, 1895). See Wade, *Bibliography*, 41.

[183] *The Secret Rose*, 193.

[184] Ibid.

[185] Compare "The Scholars," *Poems*, 337.

[186] *The Secret Rose*, 194-95.

[187] *The Secret* [illegible] 165. See also the poem on 166.

[188] Ibid., 167.

[189] Ibid.

[190] Ibid., 170.

[191] Ibid., 169.

[192] Ibid.

[193] Ibid. Compare Margaret in The Speckled Bird: although she has that "fragile refinement of beauty which is the greatest of all because it is not quite of this world" (129, 162), Margaret lacks the courage to defy her mother and the conventions of society by marrying Michael.

[194] The Secret Rose, 169.

[195] Ibid., 170.

[196] Ibid.

[197] Even in "The Wisdom of the King," although the Sidhe seem definitely in control, the disregard for the old laws suggests the end of an era is approaching.

[198] The Secret Rose, 174.

[199] Ibid., 171.

[200] Ibid., 154, 153, 147. The monks in the story have made a mockery of the Christian cross by continuing its original use, thus perverting it from its redeemed function as tree of life.

[201] Ibid., 162-63.

[202] Finneran sees Yeats's attitude to Christianity as inconsistent, citing the Sidhe's support for the Catholic friars in this story (Finneran, Prose, 34). Apparently Finneran feels it is inappropriate for the pagan gods to assist adherents of the new religion which has relegated them to the twilight. It seems natural to me, however, that the Sidhe should ally themselves with the native Irish Catholics, who love beautiful religious art, ritual,

and tradition, and that they should stand opposed to the Puritans who are an upstart foreign-based force seen as the tool of English domination and noted for dour dislike of all things beautiful, "frivolous" or smacking of idolatry. The Sidhe are, after all, merely defending the homeland against invaders: this has been their legendary role since they pushed back the Fomoroh on the Towery Plain.

[203] *The Secret Rose*, 194.

[204] Ibid., 187.

[205] Ibid., 163, 164.

[206] Ibid., 181, 183.

[207] Ibid., 209.

[208] Ibid., 210.

[209] Ibid., 166.

[210] Ibid.

[211] Ibid., 172.

[212] Compare *The King's Threshold*, *Plays*, 256-312.

[213] *The Secret Rose*, 170.

[214] Ibid., 168, 170. Compare *At the Hawk's Well*, especially the final song of the musicians (*Plays*, 412-14).

[215] *The Secret Rose*, 152.

[216] Ibid., 154.

[217] Ibid., 155.

[218] Ibid.

[219] W.B. Yeats, "The Binding of the Hair," in The Secret Rose (1897); rpt. in Uncollected Prose, I, 391.

[220] Dectira's role as human surrogate for the divine principle is suggested by many details in the story, including the fact that she is young, wise, and beautiful. The description of Aodh's "listening in silence to the rustling of her dress" ("The Binding of the Hair," 391) echoes the passage quoted earlier from "The Crucifixion of the Outcast" in which Cumhal speaks of his pursuit of eternal beauty, saying he has "heard in [his] heart the rustling of the rose-bordered dress of her who is more subtle than Aengus the Subtle-hearted" (The Secret Rose, 155). The hyperbole of Aodh's song of love to Dectira befits a hymn to eternal beauty. (See "The Binding of the Hair," 393, especially the second stanza of the poem.)

[221] "The Binding of the Hair," 391.

[222] O'Driscoll, Symbolism, 26.

[223] "The Binding of the Hair," 393.

[224] O'Driscoll, Symbolism, 27.

[225] In the mid-1930's, Yeats rewrote "The Binding of the Hair" as a play, The King of the Great Clock Tower, which appeared first in prose (1934) and then in verse (1935). He subsequently revised the play drastically and it re-appeared as A Full Moon in March. Although the Stroller and Swineherd of the plays are reworkings of Aedh, his name does not occur in these plays. I discuss The King of the Great Clock Tower and A Full Moon in March in Chapter Four. Aedh is also a character in The Herne's Egg (1938). The Aedh of this play has a relatively minor role as the mortal king of Tara; he bears little relationship to the earlier Aedh except that he is a teller of tales. (See Plays, 1013-14).

The first mention of Aedh that I have found in Yeats's work is in "Irish National Literature, II: Contemporary Prose Writers . . .," published in The Bookman, August, 1895. (Poems, with its revised version of "The Wanderings of Oisin" did not appear until October 1895, and "The Binding of the Hair" came out first in January 1896 in The Savoy and was reprinted only once in the first edition of The Secret Rose, 1897). The Bookman article contains a review of Nora Hopper's Ballads in Prose, which Yeats praises "with hardly a reservation." He confesses that he has been "haunted all the winter by 'Daluan,' 'The Gifts of Aodh and Una,' 'The Four Kings,' and 'Aonan-na-Righ,' and more than all by the sacrifice of Aodh in the temple of the heroes, that the land might be delivered from famine" (in Uncollected Prose, I, 370). Yeats then quotes at length from Hopper's description of Aodh's sacrifice. Grossman explains the Hopper material:

> In the Temple of the Heroes the mythical dead of Ireland draw their substance from Ireland's poet [Aodh], and the poet withers away. In this way "Reality" in the Neoplatonic sense, or Wisdom in the occult sense, feeds malignantly on the life of the hero, as art on the vitality of the artist. Given the work, to use the terms of "The Choice," there can be no life. (Grossman, 38-39)

[226] Standish O'Grady, History of Ireland (London: Sampson, Lowe, Searle, Marston, etc., 1878-1880), II, 319 as quoted in Grossman, 111. Grossman devotes a large section of his sixth chapter to Aedh. See especially 106-14.

[227] Grossman sees O'Grady's Aedh as the positive image and the Aedh of The Wind Among the Reeds as always negative because he is "a god of death in the form of a poet obsessed with cataclysm"--"the consummation of [his] love requires the destruction of the whole real world" (Grossman, 111). This seems to me rather overstated, although there is some support for it in "Aedh tells of a Valley full of Lovers," "Aedh tells of the Perfect Beauty," "Aedh hears the Cry of the Sedge," and "Aedh wishes his Beloved were dead," all of which contain references to the cataclysm or the death of the Beloved. A careful reading of these poems, however, will, I think, reveal that they are generally more positive than one would at first expect. Aedh is, of course, "Building a sorrowful loveliness," but in balance the emphasis seems to me to fall on the last word: in the order of his poems, he desires to reshape "All things uncomely and broken" in the world so that they will not wrong the image of his beloved in his heart (Poems, 142-43); he tells her he has lost his new love because she realized he still loves the old (Poems, 152); he builds for the old love that sorrowful loveliness because of her eternal beauty (Poems, 157); he warns other lovers that very beauty may blind them to the charms of their own love until the final cataclysm comes (Poems, 163); he bows only before the perfect beauty of his beloved and of the stars and will do so until the end of time (Poems, 164); he realizes that he shall never possess her until then (Poems, 165); but still he makes from a "mouthful of air" a poem in her praise that will survive much longer than her detractors will (Poems, 166); he pleads for peace for his beloved (Poems, 174); he wishes she were dead so that she might be free to come to him (Poems, 175); he desires to give her the three great lights of heaven but in their place offers her his only possession--his dreams (Poems, 176).

[228] "The Binding of the Hair," 391, 393.

[229] Ibid., 391.

[230] Grossman describes the Aodh of "The Binding of the Hair" as "the hopeless lover," citing the fact that Dectira fastens up her hair, rather than engulfing her lover in it, thus "making emphatic the hopelessness of the poet's address and constructing a typical symbol of a condition of order beyond human achievement" (Grossman, 113). Aodh's singing, as we might expect from Grossman's emphasis on sexuality, is "in this context . . . a symbol expressing the completion of a sexual relationship the condition of which is the death of the poet-lover" (Grossman, 112).

[231] Grossman says that "Aedh is by far the most important single poetic surrogate in *The Wind among the Reeds* and that nine of the thirty-seven poems in the volume are assigned to him (Grossman, 111). There are actually ten (see below, n232). He is perhaps not counting "Aedh gives his Beloved Certain Rhymes" since this is the song of the severed head from "The Binding of the Hair."

[232] "The Desire of Man and of Woman" (1897) = "Mongan laments the Change that has come upon him and his Beloved" (1899) = "He mourns for the Change that has come upon him and his Beloved, and longs for the End of the World" (1906).
"Song of Mongan" (1898) = "Mongan thinks of his Past Greatness" (1899) = "He thinks of his Past Greatness when a Part of the Constellations of Heaven" (1906).

"The Shadowy Horses" (1896) = "Michael Robartes bids his Beloved be at Peace" (1899) = "He bids his Beloved be at Peace" (1906).
"O'Sullivan Rua to Mary Lavell" (1896) = "Michael Robartes remembers Forgotten Beauty" (1899) = "He remembers Forgotten Beauty" (1906).
"The Twilight of Forgiveness" (1895) = "Michael Robartes asks Forgiveness because of his Many Moods" (1899) = "The Lover asks Forgiveness because of his Many Moods" (1906).

"The Rose in my Heart" (1892) = "Aedh tells of the Rose in his Heart" (1899) = "The Lover tells of the Rose in his Heart" (1906).
"Aodh to Dectora/Three Songs/ 2" (1898) = "Aedh laments the Loss of Love" (1899) = "The Lover mourns for the Loss of Love" (1906).
Untitled (in "The Binding of the Hair") (1896) = "Aedh gives his Beloved certain Rhymes" (1899) = "He gives his Beloved certain Rhymes (1906).
"The Valley of Lovers" (1897) = "Aedh tells of a Valley full of Lovers" (1899) = "He tells of a Valley full of Lovers" (1906).
"O'Sullivan the Red to Mary Lavell I" (1896) = "Two Poems by O'Sullivan the Red concerning Mary Lavell" (1896) = "Aedh tells of the Perfect Beauty" (1899) = "He tells of the Perfect Beauty" (1906).

"Aodh to Dectora/Three Songs/I" (1898) = "Aedh hears the Cry of the Sedge" (1899) = "He hears the Cry of the Sedge" (1906).
"Aodh to Dectora/Three Songs/ 3" (1898) = "Aedh thinks of those who have Spoken Evil of his Beloved" (1899) = "He thinks of those who have Spoken Evil of his Beloved" (1906).
"A Mystical Prayer to the Masters of the Elements, Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael" (1892) = "A Mystical Prayer to the Masters of the Elements, Finvarra, Feacra, and Caolte" (1894) = "Aodh pleads with the Elemental Powers" (1898) = "Aedh pleads with the Elemental Powers" (1899) = "The Poet pleads with the Elemental Powers" (1906).
"Aodh to Dectora" (1898) = "Aedh wishes his Beloved were dead" (1899) = "He wishes his Beloved were dead" (1906).
"Aedh wishes for the Cloths of Heaven" (1899) = "He wishes for the Cloths of Heaven" (1906).

"Windle-straws/ 1. O'Sullivan Rua to the Curlew" (1896) = "Hanrahan reproves the Curlew" (1899) = "He reproves the Curlew" (1906).
Untitled (in "The Twisting of the Rope") (1892) = untitled (in "The Twisting of the Rope and Hanrahan the Red") (1897) = "O'Sullivan the Red upon his Wanderings" (1897) = "Hanrahan laments because of his Wanderings" (1899) = "The Lover mourns because of his Wanderings" (1906) = "Maid Quiet" (1908).
Untitled (in "The Vision of O'Sullivan the Red") (1896) = untitled (in "The Vision of Hanrahan the Red") (1897) = "Hanrahan speaks to the Lovers of his Songs in Coming Days" (1899) = "A Lover speaks to the Lovers of his Songs in Coming Days" (1906) = "The Lover speaks to the Hearers of his Songs in Coming Days" (1933).

In a note after the title of "Mongan thinks of his Past Greatness," Yeats tells us that "in the old Celtic poetry, [Mongan] is a famous wizard and king who remembers his passed lives" (Poems, 177). Ellman says "Yeats's Mongan only slightly resembles the legendary Mongan, himself an elusive character" and refers the reader to H. d'Arbois de Jubainville, The Irish Mythological Cycle (Dublin, Hodges, Figgis, 1903), 190-96 (Ellmann, Identity, 303).

Yeats's use of the historical Jacobite poet Owen O'Sullivan the Red is discussed briefly by both Grossman and Richard J. Finneran ("'Old lecher with a love on every wind': A Study of Yeats' Stories of Red Hanrahan," Texas Studies in Literature and Language, 14, No. 2 [Summer, 1972], 350-51). Grossman concludes that Yeats eventually eliminates the name from his material because "the persona of O'Sullivan was too overt and subject to limitation by historical fact, and the Jacobite position was, though colourful, excessively specific (Grossman, 106).

[233] Ellmann, Identity, 302.

[234] Rosarium philosophorum in Artis Auriferae II, 378; quoted and translated in Jung, 120n.

[235] Walter Pater, The Renaissance (1873, 1888; rpt. Cleveland: Meridian-World, 1961), 222.

[236] The Secret Rose, 185.

[237] See my Chapter One, passim, especially 17-18.

[238] Compare the alchemist's role as both ars and artifex, expressed by Villiers in Axël and Sara.

[239] Jung quotes "an uncanonical saying of our Lord":

> "Ait autem ipse salvator: Qui iuxta me est, iuxta ignem est, qui longe est a me, longe est a regno" (The Saviour himself says: He that is near me is near the fire. He that is far from me is far from the kingdom).

(Origen, Homiliae in Jeremiam, XX, 3; cited in Montague Rhodes James, ed. and trans., The Apocraphal New Testament (Oxford, 1924), 35, as quoted in Jung, 196n.)

[240] The poem appeared only in 1908 in Collected Works, Vol. II. Compare Yeats's statement in a letter written in 1888 to Katharine Tynan: "My life has been in my poems. To make them I have broken my life in a mortar, as it were" (Letters, 84).

[241] Per Amica, 325. It is for this reason that "Ille" of "Ego Dominus Tuus" seeks an image which is both a literary image and a psychological principle of projection. This image will help him summon "the mysterious one" who is simultaneously most like and most unlike him, being his anti-self. The mysterious anti-self will reveal the secret meanings of the characters Ille traces upon the sands, the symbols of his true but hidden nature, (see Per Amica, 321-24 and Poems, 367-71). Robert M. Schuler relates Yeats's integration of autobiography and art to alchemy: "the alchemist's need to transform himself into 'gold' explains the aesthetic principle behind Yeats's habit of melting, casting, and recasting his autobiography into lasting works of art [;] it shows the poet's motive to be more than self-indulgence" (Schuler, 53).

[242] Finneran, Prose, 17. Finneran goes on to quote part of the letter to John O'Leary in which Yeats describes The Secret Rose as "an honest attempt towards that aristocratic esoteric Irish literature, which has been my chief ambition. We have literature for the people but nothing yet for the few" (Letters, 286; quoted in Finneran, Prose, 17).

[243] See Wade, *Bibliography*, 41.

[244] See Ibid., 74. Finneran points out that "even though all editions of the [Hanrahan] collection since 1925 have had the following statement on the title page: 'rewritten in 1907 with Lady Gregory's help'" the revisions were actually carried out in 1903-04 (see Finneran, "Old Lecher," 349, 349n). Only fairly minor revisions occur after the 1905 edition and most would probably not be due to Lady Gregory's assistance (for instance, the poems in "The Twisting of the Rope" and "Hanrahan's Vision" are changed). For a collation of the printed versions of the Hanrahan stories, see Michael J. Sidnell, "Versions of the *Stories of Red Hanrahan*," *Yeats Studies: An International Journal*, I (Bealtaine, 1971), 119-174.

[245] On the historical sources of Hanrahan, see Finneran, "Old lecher," 350-51. Yeats tells us in "The Tower" (*Poems*, 411), "I myself created Hanrahan." In John Quinn's copy of the 1905 edition of *Stories of Red Hanrahan* Yeats wrote, "Red Hanrahan is an imaginary name--I saw it over a shop, or rather part of it over a shop in a Galway village--but there were many poets like him in the eighteenth century in Ireland" (Wade, *Bibliography*, 74).

[246] "The Book of the Great Dhoul and Hanrahan the Red," in *The Secret Rose* (1897), 127; *Stories of Red Hanrahan*, 215.

[247] *The Secret Rose* (1897), 132, 126. The grimoire is an actual text entitled *The Constitution of Honorius*. It was first published in Rome in 1629, but attributed to Pope Honorius III, whose reign was 1216-1227. In *La Clef des grands mystères* (Paris: Félix Alcan, n.d.), Eliphas Lévi describes the grimoire as follows:

> Le grimoire d'Honorius se compose d'une constitution apocriphe d'Honorius [III] pour l'évocation et le gouvernement des ésprits; plus, de quelques recettes superstitieuses . . . C'était le manuel des mauvais prêtres qui exerçaient la magie noire pendant les plus tristes périodes du moyen âge. On y trouve des rites sanglants mêlés à des profanations de la messe et des espèces consacrées, des formules d'envoûtement et de maléfices, puis des pratiques que la stupidité seule peut admettre et la fourberie conseiller. Enfin, c'est un livre complet dans son genre: aussi est-il devenu fort rare en librairie, et les amateurs le poussent-ils très haut dans les ventes publiques. (166-67)

[248] As with most of Yeats's immortal women who stand in the role of Eternal Beauty, there is a "border of little embroidered roses that went round and about the edge of [Cleena's] robe" (*The Secret Rose*, 1897, 135). Compare the description of the faery woman in *Dhoya*: "Her dress was white, save for a border of feathers dyed the fatal red of the spirits" (*John Sherman and Dhoya*, 119).

[249] *The Secret Rose* (1897), 134.

[250] Ibid., 137.

[251] *The Secret Rose* (1897), 137-38. Compare Villiers's story "Véra." The comte d'Athol, refusing to accept the death of his young bride, fills his house and especially their bedroom with memories and love of her. The effect is like Hanrahan's evocation of Cleena. The spiritual presence of Véra, the wife, is felt throughout the house, even by the servant. On the anniversary of Véra's death she appears to the count:

> Le comte avait creusé dans l'air la forme de son amour, et il fallait bien que ce vide fût comblé par le seul être qui lui était homogène, autrement l'Univers aurait croulé. L'impression passa, en ce moment, définitive, simple, absolue, qu'*Elle devait être là, dans la chambre*! . . . Un frais éclat de rire musical éclaira de sa joie le lit nuptial; le comte se retourna. Et là, devant ses yeux, faite de volonté et de souvenir, accoudée, fluide, sur l'oreiller de dentelles, sa main soutenant ses lourds cheveux noirs, sa bouche délicieusement entr'ouverte en un sourire tout emparadisé de voluptés, belle à en mourir, enfin! la comtesse Véra le regardait un peu endormie encore.

("Véra," in *Contes cruels* in *Oeuvres complètes*, II, 32-33). They enjoy a night of ecstatic love until the count suddenly remembers, "Mais tu es morte!" ("Véra," 33). Véra disappears immediately, but leaves behind the key to her tomb.

[252] *The Secret Rose*, 1897, 137.

[253] Ibid., 139.

[254] O'Driscoll, *Symbolism*, 33-34.

[255] In the context of an examination of At the Hawk's Well, F.A.C. Wilson takes a brief look at "Red Hanrahan," the story that replaces "The Book of the Great Dhoul and Hanrahan the Red"; he applies a similar pattern to the story which he terms "a simple account of the quest for the cauldron of the Dagda, which is the Celtic Grail." (See F.A.C. Wilson, Yeats's Iconography [Victor Gollancz, 1960; reprinted, London: Methuen, 1969], 47-52.)

[256] O'Driscoll, Symbolism, 32. O'Driscoll compares the change in Hanrahan's role with the speaker's shift from active to passive between "To the Rose upon the Rood of Time" and "The Hosting of the Sidhe."

[257] Stories of Red Hanrahan, 213. On the Samhain setting, see ibid., 216, 219. Samhain, held about November 1, was the Celtic winter or harvest festival, an appropriate time for the gathering of souls, as even Christianity recognizes -- October 31 is All Soul's Day, and November 1 All Saints.

[258] Stories of Red Hanrahan, 218. In his discussion of Yeats's boar without bristles, O'Driscoll draws attention to an incident of Irish folklore with which Yeats may have been familiar: "a certain schoolmaster was in the habit of changing his pupils into hounds and one into a hare." In revenge, the father of the boy he had transformed into the hare convinced the teacher to show off by changing himself into a pig. When he obliged, the father burnt the teacher's grimoire and he was unable to return to human shape. (See O'Driscoll, Symbolism, 58; the folk belief was recorded by R.S. Rogers, "The Folklore of the Black Pig's Dyke," Ulster Folk Life, II [1957], 30-31.) It is possible that this piece of folklore is one of the sources of Yeats's "Hanrahan the Red." Yeats himself cites "a Sligo tale about 'a wild old man in flannel' who could change a pack of cards into the likeness of a pack of hounds" (Early Poems and Stories, 1925, 528; quoted in Sidnell, "Versions of The Stories of Red Hanrahan," 166).

[259] "The Philosophy of Shelley's Poetry," 90. The symbolism is natural enough when the hound's role as hunter is considered and to this is added its melancholy baying, especially on moonlit nights.

[260] Stories of Red Hanrahan, 220.

[261] Ibid.

[262] Jung, 195.

263 Stories of Red Hanrahan, 220.

264 Ibid., 213; see also 221.

265 Ellmann, Identity, 29. Interpretation of Tarot symbolism varies from author to author; Cirlot, Waite, and Yeats, for instance, all disagree over even the assignment of the four Tarot suits to parallels with the suits of the common playing deck (see Cirlot, 310; Arthur Edward Waite, The Pictorial Key to the Tarot [1910; rpt. New Hyde Park, N.J.: University Books, c1959], viii ; Yeats, Stories of Red Hanrahan, 213, 221). All seem, however, to interpret the Tarot as, in Cirlot's words, "an image (comparable to that encountered in dreams) of the path of initiation" (Cirlot, 310). Raine points out that the Tarot emblems "recur in the ritual of the Golden Dawn as the four elemental weapons of the magician" used to evoke and control the elements and their correspondences (Raine, Tarot, 18). Among the works that discuss Tarot symbolism are Raine, Tarot; Regardie (especially Vol. I and Vol. IV, Book 8); Waite, Pictorial Key; Lévi, Dogme et rituel; Cirlot.

266 Finneran treats Hanrahan's inability to question the Sidhe as a "refusal to accept the summons of the immortal world" and goes on to discuss the consequences of his inaction on the "personal, poetic, and national" levels and his subsequent redemption through actions relating to all three ("Old lecher," 354-56; emphasis mine).

267 Raine, Tarot, 20.

268 Stories of Red Hanrahan, 223; see also 239.

269 "Magic," in Essays and Introductions, 28.

270 See, for example, "Magic," 36-37. Villiers shares Yeats's belief in these and other magical doctrines and psychic phenomena. Examples of extra-sensory perception are found in Axël when, for instance, Janus reads the minds of other characters, replying to their unspoken thoughts, or divines that Sara, having renounced the religious life will shortly arrive at the castle.

271 "The Philosophy of Shelley's Poetry," 79. On Yeats and Plato, see Raine, Death-in-Life, 13-15. Studies of parallels between the work of Yeats and Jung include, James Olney, "'A Powerful Emblem': The Towers of Yeats and Jung," The South Atlantic Quarter-

ly, 72, No. 4 (Autumn, 1973), 494-515; James Olney, "The Esoteric Flower: Yeats and Jung," in Yeats and the Occult, ed. George Mills Harper, 27-54; Richard J. Wall and Roger Fitzgerald, "Yeats and Jung: an Ideological Comparison," Literature and Psychology, 13, No. 2 (Spring, 1963), 44-52.

[272] "The Symbolism of Poetry," 163, 159.

[273] Ibid., 159.

[274] Stories of Red Hanrahan, 249.

[275] Ibid., 252.

[276] Ibid., 254.

[277] Ibid., 253-54.

[278] Ibid., 256.

[279] Ibid., 257.

[280] Ibid., 258.

[281] Ibid., 259.

[282] Ibid., 259-60. Compare Hanrahan's experience of involuntary memory with his earlier vision evoked by the rose-petals, and with Sara's rosicrucian vision when her rose and dagger are juxtaposed by chance.

[283] Stories of Red Hanrahan, 221, 260. Diane Bessai writes of Winny's transformation: "Winny, who on one hand represents the summation of all [Hanrahan's] mortal horrors and fears, is transformed into that divine vision which he had sought throughout his life. The dream which life could not fulfill is fulfilled in death. While it is a moment of pathos, it is also a moment of spiritual completion" (Bessai, 417).

[284] Stories of Red Hanrahan, 260.

[285] "Swedenborg, Mediums, and the Desolate Places," 37.

[286] *Stories of Red Hanrahan*, 261. Compare the role of the peasants in the burial and immortalization of Proud Costello.

[287] Also called "The Song of Red Hanrahan" (1903), this poem appeared untitled in the story "Hanrahan and Cathleen the Daughter of Hoolihan" (1904) and its variations as well as in *A Broad Sheet* (April, 1903).

[288] Although Yeats does not mention Hanrahan in the poem, when "The Heart of the Woman" originally appeared in "Those who Live in the Storm," it was attributed to O'Sullivan the Red and later transferred to his successor, Hanrahan, when the story was reprinted as "The Rose of Shadow" in *The Secret Rose*. It is the song which Hanrahan sang "after he had listened to the singing of those who are about the faery Cleena of the Wave, and it has lured, and will lure, many a girl from her hearth and from her peace" ("The Rose of Shadow," in *The Secret Rose*, 1897; rpt. in *Uncollected Prose*, I, 330). "The Rose of Shadow" did not appear in *The Secret Rose* after the first edition.

[289] In *The Celtic Twilight and Stories of Red Hanrahan* (*The Collected Works in Verse and Prose*, Vol. V [Stratford-on-Avon: Bullen, 1908], this poem was replaced by an untitled variant of "The Happy Townland." (See information on printings, *Poems*, 213.)

[290] *Stories of Red Hanrahan*, 243.

[291] See "The Twisting of the Rope," and "Red Hanrahan's Curse."

[292] Finneran, "Old lecher," 357. Nuada of the Silver Hand is Echtge's father. Finneran writes that he was "a king of the Tuatha De Danaan and largely responsible for their victory over the various Powers of Darkness" (Finneran, "Old lecher," 354). More accurately, he led the Danaans on their invasion of Ireland when they defeated the old inhabitants, the Fir Bolg, in the first Battle of Moytura. Nuada lost an arm in this battle and it was replaced with "a fully jointed all-purpose silver hand" (Dillon and Chadwick, 148). Nevertheless, because of his handicap Nuada was not allowed to lead the Danaans in the second Battle of Moytura when the Fomoroh invaded Ireland. After much debate among the gods, this task was given to Lug. (See Dillon and Chadwick, 147-49.)

[293] See Grossman, 103-23.

[294] *Per Amica*, 346. See also *A Vision*, 220n: "I think it was

Porphyry who wrote that the generation of images in the mind is from water."

295 "Rosa Alchemica" is the first of a trilogy of stories, the chronology and sequence of which suggest they may at one time have been meant to form a novel. "Rosa Alchemica" appeared first in The Savoy (April, 1896); its sequel, "The Tables of the Law," in The Savoy (November, 1896); and "The Adoration of the Magi" in the privately printed volume, The Tables of the Law. The Adoration of the Magi (1897). Yeats had intended to publish all three stories in The Secret Rose (1897), but Bullen, the publisher, panicked when he read the last two works and would allow only "Rosa Alchemica" in the volume. Later he changed his mind about them. (See Yeats's note to Early Poems and Stories [London: Macmillan, 1925]; quoted in part in Finneran, Prose, 34 n29.) As with most of his prose works, Yeats revised all three of these stories almost every time he reprinted them. Although the changes do not alter the plot, they often make subtle shifts in meaning or emphasis; sometimes they clarify a reference. Frequently, however, the revisions are matters of improving style or structure. See Finneran, Prose, 40-41, for a summary of the republication history of the three stories.

By coincidence, among the "Oeuvres du Même Auteur" listed opposite the title page of Villiers's Le Nouveau Monde (Paris: Ollendorff, 1880) is a work entitled L'Adoration des Mages. Since it has never been found, it is likely that it was merely projected and never written.

MacGregor Mathers has been suggested as the most important source on which Yeats founded the character of Michael Robartes. See, for example, Warwick Gould, "'Lionel Johnson Comes the First to Mind': Sources for Owen Aherne," in Yeats and the Occult, ed. George Mills Harper, 255; and Laurence W. Fennelly, "W.B. Yeats and S.L. MacGregor Mathers," in Yeats and the Occult, ed. George Mills Harper, 305.

296 W.B. Yeats "Rosa Alchemica," in Early Poems and Stories (London: Macmillan, 1925); rpt. in Mythologies, 283-84. Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations from "Rosa Alchemica" are taken from Mythologies. Schuler examines Yeats's use of alchemy in "Rosa Alchemica" and a number of poems.

297 "Rosa Alchemica," 278, 282.

298 Ibid., 276, 273.

299 Ibid., 278, 280.

300 Ibid., 271.

[301] Ibid., 289.

[302] Ibid., 286.

[303] Ibid., 267.

[304] Ibid.

[305] Ibid., 274-75. In the manuscript of the "Final" version of The Speckled Bird there is a passage in which Michael, daydreaming, conjures up the imaginary characters the fishermen speak of in their tales,

> and sometimes it would seem to him that his imagination began to move of itself, and that the forms it called before him came from their own will and not his will. . . . He would watch some troop of figures moving before his mind's eye--at first coming, it seemed, out of what he was reading at the time, but presently out of some deeper life--and wonder whether they were mere imagination. (The Speckled Bird, 29)

In an earlier manuscript Michael plans an occult order based on aesthetic principles and the Grail literature. He writes to Margaret about the sacredness and power of the imagination:

> We will change all things if we can make the imagination sacred. One little group of impulses and of images created by the imagination of the early centuries are indeed sacred--the mother and child, St. Peter with his fishing net, the figure on the cross, certain forms of prayer, and certain words--but all the images and impulses of the imagination, just in so far as they are shaped and ordered in beauty and in peace, must become sacred. To do this they must be associated deliberately and directly with the history of the soul, and they must be given so coherent and intense and separate a life that they shall seem the immortalities and perfections that they are. . . . O my dear one, there is nothing but the imagination, and we and all that we can see are but shadows of the images it made before the beginning of time, and the great myths, the great legends, that have made all that is permanent in us, are the activities of the gods building the creation of time, the breath of

> the god who is over the gods moving upon the waters. (The Speckled Bird, 205-06)

The tragic and tragi-comic sides of the "making and unmaking" of humanity by the divinities of the imagination are portrayed in Madame Bovary and Don Quixote, two images of the effect of art on fictitious life. They are literary parallels of that real life destruction which we have seen so concerns Yeats in "The Man and the Echo."

[306] "The Philosophy of Shelley's Poetry," 79.

[307] "The Symbolism of Poetry," 156-57.

[308] "Magic," 52.

[309] "Rosa Alchemica," 284.

[310] O'Donnell, "Yeats as Adept," points out that the cover of The Secret Rose (1897) is almost identical with the cover of the magical textbook in "Rosa Alchemica" and that The Secret Rose volume might, therefore, "qualify as a talisman or physical symbol of magical wisdom" (62). See ibid., 62-63 and Ellmann, Identity, 64-65, for analyses of the cover of The Secret Rose (1897).

[311] "Rosa Alchemica," 284-85. Compare the bodiless soul that descends to inhabit the android in Villiers's novel L'Eve future. In the Savoy edition of "Rosa Alchemica," the narrator remembers a particular mood.

> that mood which Edgar Poe found in a wine-cup, and how it passed into France and took possession of Baudelaire, and from Baudelaire passed to England and the Pre-Raphaelites, and then again returned to France, and still wanders the world, enlarging its power as it goes, awaiting the time when it shall be, perhaps, alone, or, with other moods, master over a great new religion, and an awakener of the fanatical wars that hovered in the gray surges, and forget the wine-cup where it was born. (The Savoy, 2 [April, 1896], 66-67)

Although the passage was removed in revision, it is an interesting indication of the importance Yeats attached to symbolism at this time. He saw it as the subjective, spiritual literary movement that would eventually overcome the objective, materialistic movements--realism and naturalism--and in time change the face of the earth. Although the narrator of "Rosa Alchemica" does not by any means always speak for Yeats, he seems to in this case. The fact that Yeats excised the passage suggests it represented an attitude of some significance about which he later had second thoughts.

[312] See, for example, "Anima Mundi," in Per Amica, 343-66.

[313] W.B. Yeats, "Is the Order of R.R. & A.C. to remain a Magical Order? Written in March, 1901, and given to the Adepti of the Order of R.R. & A.C. in April, 1901," Appendix K in George Mills Harper, Yeats's Golden Dawn (London: Macmillan, 1974), 261, 265.

[314] Ibid., 262.

[315] Compare Kaspar's verbal counterfeiting, which is a form of blasphemy and murder. See my Chapter One, 71-72.

[316] See August Strindberg, The Road to Damascus: A Trilogy, trans. Graham Rawson (London: Jonathan Cape, c1939), 136. Compare Yeats's statement in "Is the Order of R.R. & A.C. to remain a Magical Order?":

> We receive power from those who are above us by permitting the Lightning of the Supreme to descend through our souls and our bodies. The power is forever seeking the world, and it comes to a soul and consumes its mortality because the soul has arisen into the path of the Lightning, among the sacred leaves. ("Is the Order . . . ?" 266)

Yeats takes his imagery here from the Qabalah. The "sacred leaves" are on the Qabalistic Tree of Life and the "path of the Lightning" is one of the three paths to unity with the Divine Essence: the path of the serpent which is the normal, winding route of ascent through steady stages and successive reincarnations, the path of the arrow which is the hero or saint's quick and direct ascent through sacrifice, and the path of the lightning which is the route by which divine inspiration or revelation descends suddenly. (See Per Amica, 340, 361; Raine, Tarot, 22, 40, 51-54, et passim; O'Donnell, "Yeats as Adept," 76-77.) Hanrahan had been on the path of the serpent, but just before he died his experience with the domestic correspondents to the talismans and his sudden participation in the Great Memory marked his move into the path of the lightning.

[317] "Symbolism in Painting," in Ideas of Good and Evil (London: Bullen, 1903); rpt. in Mythologies, 148-49.

[318] "Magic," 49. In Symbolism and Some Implications of the Symbolic Approach, Robert O'Driscoll gives an excellent distillation of Yeats's approach to symbolism. See especially his first chapter, "The Nature of Symbolism" (9-19). O'Driscoll draws heavily on "The Symbolic System" in Vol. I of the Ellis/Yeats edition of The Works of William Blake (London, 1893). We know from his own testimony that Yeats wrote at least the first chapter of this section: in a letter to Katharine Tynan, June 27, 1891, Yeats states "I . . . wrote a very important essay called 'The necessity of symbolism' for the book on Blake and went through it with Ellis and made suggested alterations" (Letters, 170). O'Driscoll says that the manuscripts extant prove that almost all "The Symbolic System" was written by Yeats (O'Driscoll, Symbolism, 10).

[319] O'Driscoll, Symbolism, 13, quoting Yeats, "William Blake and his Illustrations to the Divine Comedy," 117.

[320] "Rosa Alchemica," 286.

[321] Ibid., 287.

[322] Ibid., 288.

[323] Ibid., 287.

[324] Ibid., 288. The dance with its "flame-like figures" foreshadows the more famous dance on the Byzantine dancing floor:

> At midnight on the Emperor's pavement flit
> Flames that no faggot feeds, nor steel has lit,
> Nor storm disturbs, flames begotten of flame,
> Where blood-begotten spirits come
> And all complexities of fury leave,
> Dying into a dance,
> An agony of trance,
> An agony of flame that cannot singe a sleeve. (Poems, 498)

[325] Despite Yeats's involvement in the Golden Dawn, a Rosicrucian order, Harry Goldgar attributes the rosicrucian aspect of his rose symbol to the influence of Axël. Referring to The Secret Rose stories, and "Out of the Rose" in particular, he writes:

> Sans aucun doute, la Rose, ici symbolise pour Yeats la révélation mystérieuse de la divinité qui est achevée lorsque l'homme, par les pratiques ascétiques et l'initiation et la renonciation au monde, s'est rendu maître de son destin. La rose autrefois avait été pour Yeats un "symbole d'amour spirituel et de beauté suprême"; maintenant, après Axël, elle devient à peu près exclusivement un symbole de l'ordre régulier des Rose-Croix.

("Deux Dramaturges," 271; see also Goldgar, "Axël . . . et The Shadowy Waters," 570.)

[326] The note is to the poems "Aedh pleads with the Elemental Powers," "Mongan thinks of his Past Greatness," "Aedh hears the Cry of the Sedge."

[327] "Rosa Alchemica," 288, 269.

[328] Ibid., 270.

[329] Compare "The Adoration of the Magi" where the youngest of the three old Magi answers his brother's objection that "if there are many Immortals, there cannot be only one Immortal" with the observation that "it seems . . . that the names we are to take down are the names of one, so it must be that he can take many forms" (W.B. Yeats, "The Adoration of the Magi," in Mythologies, 314; unless otherwise indicated, all quotations from "The Adoration of the Magi" are taken from Mythologies).

[330] Schuler, 41. Yeats was aware of Hermes's Tabula. He quotes a version of this phrase in the opening to his essay "Symbolism in Painting" (146) and refers to another section of the work at the close of "Emotion of Multitude": "Did not the Egyptian carve it on emerald that all living things have the sun for father and the moon for mother, and has it not been said that a man of genius takes the most after his mother?" (in Essays and Introductions, 216). This is an allusion to the following passage in the Tabula:

> toutes Choses se sont faites d'un Seul, par la Médiation d'un Seul: Ainsi Toutes Choses sont Nées de cette même unique Chose, par Adaptation.
>
> Le Soleil est son Père; la Lune est sa Mère; le Vent l'a porté dans son Ventre; la Terre est sa Nourrice. (Quoted in Jollivet-Castelot, 1.)

[331] "Rosa Alchemica," 275. Mary chose the rose as her special flower and is thus among the immortals who appear to the narrator in a vision.

[332] Ellis and Yeats, *Blake*, I, 402; quoted in *Druid Craft*, 17.

[333] "Rosa Alchemica," 288. Compare Hanrahan's invocation of Cleena in "The Book of the Great Dhoul and Hanrahan the Red." One of the central images in "The Wanderings of Oisin" is the "wild and sudden dance" of the Danaans who thus celebrate their immortality and mock "at Time and Fate and Chance" (*Poems*, 20).

[334] See *Poems*, 169 and *The Secret Rose*, 145-46. Goldgar terms this Yeatsian eclectism "cette fusion curieuse (ou, peut-être, cette mauvaise interprétation) des symboles." He attributes the eclecticism to a desire to reconcile rosicrucian doctrine with Christianity, particularly that of the Catholic Church ("Deux Dramaturges," 271). Goldgar bases his conclusion on part of the final sentence of "The Happiest of the Poets," Yeats's essay on William Morris: "'la réconciliation dernière lorsque sur la Croix fleuriront les roses.'" (See *Essays and Introductions*, 64: "the last reconciliation when the Cross shall blossom with roses.") Concerning the rose as the dwelling place of the gods, compare "Out of the Rose" where the rose is the "Divine Rose of Intellectual Flame" and "the Kingdom of God . . . is in the Heart of the Rose" (*The Secret Rose*, 157, 163).

[335] We should recall that in "The Trembling of the Veil" Yeats confessed with some hyperbole that "Villiers de l'Isle-Adam had shaped whatever in my *Rosa Alchemica* Pater had not shaped" (*Autobiographies*, 320-21).

[336] "Rosa Alchemica," 287, 289, 288.

[337] Ibid., 289.

[338] Ibid., 288, 277, 290. Compare the Leanhaun Shee whose "lovers waste away, for she lives on their life" (*Fairy and Folk Tales*, 385). We have already seen that Villiers portrays Sara as a death-dealing force. She tells Axël at one point, "Je crois me souvenir d'avoir fait tomber des anges. Hélas! des fleurs et des enfants sont morts de mon ombre" (*Axël*, 237). Like Yeats's immortal dancer, Sara is also associated with lilies, for she is surrounded with them in the convent ceremony of Part I, and Axël calls

her his "liliale épousée" (Axël, 258). It seems possible, then, that Yeats had Sara in mind when he wrote this passage of "Rosa Alchemica." Significantly, in the review of Axël for The Bookman, it is around "Medusa-like" Sara and not Axël that Yeats's plot summary revolves ("A Symbolical Drama," 324). Yeats quotes Verlaine's description of "a type of woman common in the works of Villiers De L'isle Adam [sic]":"Villiers conjures up the spectre of a mysterious woman, a queen of pride, who is mournful and fierce as the night when it still lingers though the dawn is beginning, with reflections of blood and of gold upon her soul and her beauty" ("A Symbolical Drama," 323; the passage is found in "Villiers de l'Isle-Adam," Les Poètes maudits in Oeuvres en prose complètes, ed. Jacques Borel [Paris: Gallimard, c1972], 683).

[339] "Rosa Alchemica," 290.

[340] "Rosa Alchemica," The Savoy, 56. In later editions they merely come to a "tragic end" ("Rosa Alchemica," 267).

[341] Schuler, 42.

[342] "Rosa Alchemica," 281.

[343] Yeats's use of rose symbolism has been discussed in a number of places, including Ellmann, Identity, 64-76; Parks, 30-48; and O'Driscoll, Symbolism, 50-52. Parks discusses Villiers's influence upon the development of Yeats's rose symbol.

[344] The narrator says Robartes' sleeping face seems "more like a mask than a face" and that the faces of the dancers who lie in exhausted sleep are "like hollow masks" ("Rosa Alchemica," 279, 290).

[345] Ibid., 306.

[346] Finneran, Prose, 20.

[347] "Rosa Alchemica," 286-87 . Yeats uses the image of the mortal as mask of the spiritual world in a number of places. In The Speckled Bird, for instance, Michael awakes one night

> to hear his own voice speaking through his lips, but as if it were another's voice, and saying "We make an image of him who sleeps and it is not him who sleeps, though it is like him who sleeps, and we call it Emmanuel." It seemed to

> him, as the voice spoke, that his body had become in some strange way impersonal and magical, like an image in a tomb, and, in the half-dream thoughts that followed waking, this image connected itself in his imagination with the image made of shavings or of a block of wood which the faeries left, in the stories, instead of the mortal they had carried away. (The Speckled Bird, 30)

In a footnote to this passage, the editor, William H. O'Donnell, calls attention to the passages in the first draft of Yeats's autobiography, and in the second edition of A Vision, in which Yeats relates Michael's experience as his own (see Memoirs, ed. Denis Donoghue [London: Macmillan, 1972], 126 and A Vision, 233). O'Donnell also points out that

> Spirits make use of a mortal's voice three times in Yeats's 1897 story "The Adoration of the Magi" and in two later poems, "Solomon and the Witch" (1919) and "The Gift of Harun Al-Rashid" (1924). The narrator of Yeats's story "Rosa Alchemica" (1896) has a dream in which he becomes a mask to be used by spirits. (The Speckled Bird, 30-31n)

Gould draws attention to Yeats's use of the image of the mask in "Rosa Alchemica" and "The Tables of the Law" and comments that he has not found any prior use of the image in Yeats's works (Gould, 283; see "Rosa Alchemica," 279, 286-87 and "The Tables of the Law," 303).

348 Ellmann (The Man and the Masks, 82-83) and those who, like Robert M. Schuler, follow his example, see Owen Aherne as the narrator of "Rosa Alchemica." When "The Tables of the Law" and "The Adoration of the Magi" are examined, however, it becomes clear, as Finneran observes (Prose, 35 n34), that Aherne is not the narrator. The narrator of all three stories is the same anonymous person. His character is consistent throughout and quite different from that of Aherne, who appears in person in the second story and by allusion in the third. In "The Tables of the Law" the narrator mentions "the terrible destiny of Michael Robartes, and his brotherhood," and the fact that he himself has been "half initiated into the Order of the Alchemical Rose" (in Mythologies, 303, 306; unless otherwise indicated, all quotations from "The Tables of the Law" are taken from Mythologies). This is the subject matter of "Rosa Alchemica," which could not, therefore, have been narrated by Aherne who is "more happy" than the narrator because he has not undergone that initiation and thus does not experience the troubling vision the narrator sees ("The Tables of the Law," 306).

[349] "The Tables of the Law," 293-95. Warwick Gould discusses the real-life sources of the character Owen Aherne. Among these sources he includes Lionel Johnson, John O'Leary, and John and Maurice Aherne. Gould draws attention to several other Yeatsian characters with similar names: the Herne brothers in "The Rose of Shadow," first published in 1894; the Hearne brothers in "The Cradles of Gold," published in 1896; Michael Hearne of The Speckled Bird. Gould also notes the relationship between "Aherne" and "heron," and remarks that the herons and the various "'Herne' characters . . . have the potential for other-wordly experience and illumination, but are condemned by fate to live on the margin between two worlds" (Gould, 273).

[350] "The Tables of the Law," 293.

[351] Ibid., 293, 294.

[352] Ibid., 294.

[353] Ibid.

[354] Ibid., 294, 300-01.

[355] Mallarmé, "Le Livre," 378.

[356] "The Tables of the Law," 301, 303.

[357] Ibid., 305-06.

[358] W.B. Yeats, "The Tables of the Law," in The Secret Rose. Rosa Alchemica. The Tables of the Law. The Adoration of the Magi. John Sherman and Dhoya, The Collected Works in Verse and Prose, Vol. VII (Stratford-on-Avon: Bullen, 1908), 154-55.

[359] "The Adoration of the Magi," 309.

[360] Ibid., 309.

[361] Ibid.

[362] See "The Gift of Harun Al-Rashid," Poems, 460-70; A Vision 8ff; Stories of Michael Robartes and His Friends, in A Vision, 35-44; "Leda and the Swan," Poems, 441; "Two Songs from a Play," Poems, 437; "The Mother of of God," Poems, 499. Unless otherwise indicated, all

quotations from Stories of Michael Robartes and his Friends are taken from the text in A Vision.

[363] This last characterristic, that of ignorance, is less marked in the woman of "The Adoration of the Magi" than in the later women, but it is hinted at nonetheless. In the early editions there are suggestions that she is not in complete possession of her faculties. Later in revision Yeats made the woman's lack of control a little clearer. See "The Adoration of the Magi," in The Tables of the Law and The Adoration of the Magi (London: Elkin Mathews, 1904), 56; and in Mythologies, 314.

[364] Compare Denise de L'Isle Adam, whose profession is love, and Mary Bell, whose relationship with John Bond is adulterous (Michael Robartes and his Friends).

[365] "Adoration of the Magi" (1904), 53.

[366] "Adoration of the Magi," 310.

[367] Ibid., 311.

[368] Ibid., 312.

[369] In their Notes to the critical edition of A Vision (1925), Harper and Hood discuss the unicorn:

> The unicorn was a basic symbol of the [Golden Dawn]. Upon passing the examination for the Degree of 3 = 8 (Practicus), the aspirant assumed the symbolic title of monoceros de astris, which Father John translates as "the unicorn from the stars" in Yeats's play by that title [Plays, 659]. Yeats informed his sister Lolly in 1920 that "it is a private symbol belonging to my mystical order. . . . It is the soul" [Letters, 662]. In the [automatic script] for 31 May 1919 the Control informed Yeats that the unicorn was his Daimon. (Harper and Hood, Notes, 5)

[370] Compare the "death-pale deer" of "Hanrahan laments because of his Wanderings" (The Wind Among the Reeds):

I would that the death-pale deer
Had come through the mountain side,
And trampled the mountain away,
And drunk up the murmuring tide;

> For the winds that awakened the stars
> Are blowing through my blood. . . .
> (Poems, 171, var. ll.4a-6)

When this poem was revised and retitled "Maid Quiet" in Poems Lyrical and Narrative, in the first volume of The Collected Works in Verse and Prose (1908), these six lines were deleted. Yeats draws attention to the fact that the death-pale deer, like the boar without bristles is another of his "symbols of the end of all things" (Poems, 843). O'Driscoll discusses the use of images of apocalypse in Yeats's early work; O'Driscoll includes a study of both The Unicorn from the Stars and the first version of this play, Where There is Nothing there is God (see O'Driscoll, Symbolism, 58-75).

[371] Jung, 471. Jung's discussion of the unicorn is on pages 435-71.

[372] In his 1922 farce, The Player Queen, Yeats uses the symbol in a similar way. Here the actor/poet Septimus announces "the end of the Christian Era, the coming of a New Dispensation, that of the New Adam, that of the Unicorn" (Plays, 745). On the unicorn, see also The Player Queen, Plays, 722, 724-6, 732, 749.

[373] "The Adoration of the Magi," 312.

[374] "Rosa Alchemica," 267-68.

[375] "The Autumn of the Body," 192.

[376] "Rosa Alchemica," 269, 270.

[377] Ibid., 267. The narrator should be compared to Michael, the semi-autobiographical hero of The Speckled Bird. In the manuscript of the "Final" version of the novel, Michael tells Maclagan (who believes literally in the possibility of the transmutation of base metals into gold) that the old alchemical ideas "were nothing perhaps but symbols of the greatness of man and of man's intellect" (The Speckled Bird, 63). Later in the novel Michael has a falling out with Maclagan with whom he had been collaborating on the establishment of an occult order. Maclagan writes to him to explain why they can no longer work together:

> When I met you I accepted your idea of an order centering in the Grail castle, thinking it better than nothing, but as we worked on I more and more realized that a wide gulf divided us. You thought

> all of forms--I of the inner substance. When I was thinking about the gathering into the order of ancient tradition, you were thinking of making it the foundation for patterns. I have come to recognize that you are not a magician, but some kind of an artist, and that the summum bonum itself, the potable gold of our masters, were less to you than some charm of colour, or some charm of words. (The Speckled Bird, 91-92)

In a note to himself referring to this passage, Yeats writes:

> The difference of opinion about proper kind of symbolism between Michael and Maclagan must be accentuated. Maclagan had better be quite definitely a disciple of the Rosy Cross as that is embodied in the Fama. Michael should as definitely insist on the introduction of such a symbolism as will continue and make more precise the implicit symbolism in modern art and poetry. The antagonism must be made the antagonism between the poet and magician. (The Speckled Bird, 226)

Although Maclagan is obviously patterned on MacGregor Mathers, the antagonism between Michael and Maclagan, between poet and magician, is in some measure the antagonism between two parts of Yeats's own personality: that which, desiring to transmute life into art, seeks the artist's symbols, "metaphors for poetry" (A Vision, 8), and that which would like to believe literally in the transmutation of art into life because Yeats's experiments with magic seemed to indicate that, for example, thought does have an independent reality. O'Donnell studies the conflict within Yeats between magician and artist, concluding that Yeats's decision about these antithetical pulls within himself "was simply that no decision was possible, that he had no choice but to recognize the merits of materialistic art and anti-materialistic Adeptship" (O'Donnell, "Yeats as Adept," 61).

[378] "The Autumn of the Body," 193.

[379] Letters, 402.

[380] Ibid.

[381] O'Driscoll, Symbolism, 38; see also Robert O'Driscoll, "The Tables of the Law: A Critical Text," Yeats Studies: An International Journal, 1 (Bealtaine, 1971), 88-89.

[382] "Rosa Alchemica," 269.

[383] Ibid., 267, 278, 267.

[384] Ibid., 273.

[385] Ibid., 268-69.

[386] Ibid., 276-77.

[387] Ibid., 277.

[388] Lévi, Dogme et rituel, I, 109. O'Donnell says "The narrator's timidity . . . is the central issue" in "Rosa Alchemica" and "The Tables of the Law." See "Yeats as Adept," 73-74.

[389] "Tables of the Law," 295.

[390] "Adoration of the Magi," 315.

[391] "Rosa Alchemica," 278, 292, 280.

[392] Tindall, 239.

[393] See Parks, 89-129; Goldgar, "Deux Dramaturges," 183-94, 375-79; and Goldgar, "Axël . . . et The Shadowy Waters." Like Axël, The Shadowy Waters was a long time in gestation and underwent considerable revision during the course of its publishing history. According to Yeats's own evidence (see Autobiographies, 73-74), and the testimony of such friends and acquaintances as George Russell and Forrest Reid, Yeats had begun planning The Shadowy Waters by 1883 (when he was eighteen) and had written a version of the play about a year later. (See Forrest Reid, W.B. Yeats: A Critical Study [New York: Dodd, Mead, 1915], 108-09; and A.E., Song and its Fountains [New York, 1932], 11, quoted in Druid Craft, 4.)

Yeats wrote several very different versions before The Shadowy Waters was first published in the North American Review in May 1900. He revised the play slightly for its republication in book form later that year (see Poems, 745-69), and then reworked it completely for its inclusion in Poems 1899-1905 (London: Bullen, and Dublin: Maunsel, 1906). The new version contains only about forty lines of the old (see Poems, 220-52).

At this point Yeats recognized that The Shadowy Waters was not stageworthy as it stood, but he was unwilling to give up the direction the work had taken as poem. He thus began to publish The

Shadowy Waters in two parallel forms: as "dramatic poem" (based on the 1906 version) and as play. The first "acting version" appeared in 1907 and was reworked for publication again in 1911 (see Plays, 317-39). For its republication in Later Poems (London: Macmillan, 1922), Yeats revised the "dramatic poem" (1906 version) once more.

See Druid Craft for the writing and publishing history of The Shadowy Waters. The pre-1900 manuscripts are printed in Druid Craft, which also contains a detailed study of them. See Thomas Francis Parkinson, W.B. Yeats, Self-Critic: A Study of his Early Verse (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951), 59-75, for a discussion of the revisions between the 1900 and 1905/1906 versions of The Shadowy Waters. Parkinson focusses especially on language in the work.

[394] Druid Craft, 16.

[395] W.B. Yeats, "A Symbolic Artist and the Coming of Symbolic Art," The Dome (Dec., 1898); rpt. in Uncollected Prose, II, 136. It is interesting that in Axël recurring images suggest this aspect of water: for example, "Je puis me laisser aller au courant de mes passions sans être entraîné par elles, comme un nageur dans un fleuve" (Axël, 203). And again, "Mon amour? Mes désirs?... Tu te perds en eux, comme si tu te baignais dans l'Océan" (Axël, 240).

[396] Quoted in Druid Craft, 17. Besides Forgael, among those in Yeats's work who make this voyage are Almintor, Oisin, the speaker of "The Danaan Quicken Tree" and all others who cross to the Lake Isle of Innisfree.

[397] See the two prefatory poems to The Shadowy Waters": " I walked among the Seven Woods of Coole " (Poems, 217-19), and "The Harp of Aengus" (Poems, 219-20).

[398] Kuno Meyer and Alfred Nutt, The Voyage of Bran Son of Febal to the Land of the Living . . . by Kuno Meyer, with an Essay upon the Irish Vision of the Happy Otherworld and the Celtic Doctrine of Rebirth by Alfred Nutt, Section I, The Happy Otherworld (London: 1895), 2, quoted in Druid Craft, 5.

[399] Pauly compares the symbolic voyage of The Shadowy Waters with one found in Villiers's Elën:

> Elen [sic], ce drame symbolique de Villiers où l'amour, forme concrète de la soif humaine de l'infini, ne doit pas, sous peine de crime horrible, être consommé, car ce serrait souiller

> irrémédiablement cette aspiration profonde, où les deux héros, la courtisane et l'étudiant, dans un rêve d'opium naviguent à la recherche de cet amour idéal, dans une barque, au sein d'un paysage de mort, peut être mis en parallèle avec The Shadowy Waters où Forgael, le roi-pirate des Océans, faisant voile vers une terre mythique, capture en mer une femme infiniment belle; Forgael ne peut répondre à l'amour de Dectora que lorsque, purifié de tout désir humain, cet amour devient 'a quest of love that is purely of the spirit'; uni dans cet idéal, le couple continue sa navigation symbolique. (Pauly, 28)

[400] In a programme note to The Shadowy Waters, Yeats discusses the colour symbolism of the hounds: "it may be the dark hounds, red hounds, and light hounds correspond to the Tamas, Rajas and Sattva qualities of the Vedanta philosophy, or to the three colours of the Alchemists." (The note is from Inis Fail, No. 11 [Aug.] 1905, quoted in Druid Craft, 294.)

Ellmann interprets this statement as follows:

> With the aid of Max Müller, who was probably the main source of Yeats's early knowledge of Vedanta, the passage may be glossed as meaning that the hounds symbolize thesis, antithesis, and reconciliation. As Müller puts it, "Tension between these qualities produces activity and struggle: equilibrium leads to temporary or final rest". In later life Yeats identified Tamas as darkness and exhaustion, Rajas as activity and passion, Sattva as brightness and wisdom. The three hounds signify, in terms of the play, Forgael's death-wish, Dectora's life-wish, and their fusion in "some mysterious transformation of the flesh". Yeats chooses hounds for his symbols to suggest pursuit, and their colours reflect their qualities--the dark being related to death, the red to life and passion, and the white with red ears to some kind of transmutative fusion of the two. (Identity, 81-82)

[401] "The Philosophy of Shelley's Poetry," 90.

[402] Still another explanation of Yeats's deer and hound is found on Poems, 806-07. It contains a passage almost identical to the one just quoted.

[403] Forgael is a Sea-King, Yeats tells us in the note quoted earlier. In the 1900 edition his nobility is clearly implied since Aibric, his faithful follower, has "been a King/And spoken in the Council" (Poems, 748).

[404] In the 1900 version Forgael cries out,

> Masters of our dreams,
> Why have you cloven me with a mortal love?
> Pity these weeping eyes! (Poems, 768)

Compare Axël's comment to Sara, "Mes rêves connaissent une autre lumière!--Malheur à toi, puisque tu fus la tentatrice qui troublas par la magie de ta présence, leurs vieux espoirs" (Axël, 236).

[405] The editors of Druid Craft concede that the struggle between Forgael and Dectora "owes much to the conflict of wills between Axël and Sara," but they point out that in the 1900 version of The Shadowy Waters "The underlying symbolism is caballistic (or Blakean) in origin and had occurred in work on the play before Yeats knew Axël: the union of Forgael and Dectora foreshadows the reunion of God and his Shekinah ["the feminine principle and abode of the soul"], the cessation of the primordial energy that was released by sexual division and created the world" (Druid Craft, 297, 33). The editors feel this "sense of an interpenetrating mystery, of . . . a cosmic action" is lost in the 1906 revision of the play (Druid Craft, 305).

[406] Note that, as in Axël, the treasure is located in what might be construed as a womb symbol.

[407] In his otherwise solid interpretation of the symbolism of gold and treasures in Villiers and Yeats, Parks overlooks their duality in Axël and The Shadowy Waters, insisting that they represent only "crass materialism" in these plays (see Parks, 194-95).

[408] Compare Dectora's reference to Forgael: "O morning star,/ Trembling in the black heavens like a white fawn/Upon the misty border of the wood . . ." (Poems, 251).

[409] See also Poems, 749-50. The editors of Druid Craft explain this passage as follows: "like Swedenborgian spirits, the gods wish to enjoy passions by inhabiting mortal bodies" (Druid Craft, 296).

[410] See Jung, 230-31.

[411] "A Symbolic Artist," 136.

[412] The conclusion of The Shadowy Waters posed some difficulty for Yeats, as the ending of Axël did for Villiers. Although the published editions all finish with Dectora's going off with Forgael more or less of her own free will, in manuscript versions she is sometimes left behind, sometimes offered as sacrifice to the Fomoroh, sometimes taken with Forgael while in a state of enchantment (see Druid Craft, passim). It is quite possible that the final form of the conclusion was chosen under the influence of Axël.

[413] See Letters, 454 and Druid Craft, 305.

[414] See the prefatory poem "The Harp of Aengus," Poems, 219-20.

[415] James W. Flannery, 300. See Poems, 242-46.

[416] In Druid Craft the editors discuss the revisions of the 1906 edition of The Shadowy Waters as replacing idealism with "a vein of cynicism" (Druid Craft, 305). They see the changes in the play centering on Aibric who as "a persona of the new skeptical and practical Yeats" comes "within a hairsbreadth" of being the protagonist (Druid Craft, 306).

[417] "Symbolism in Painting," 146.

[418] See the discussion of freedom and necessity in Axël in my Chapter One, 31-33.

[419] Compare the passage in the 1900 edition in which Aibric uses almost the same image to describe the opposite situation: man's hunger after immortal love:

> No man nor woman has loved otherwise
> Than in brief longing and deceiving hope
> And bodily tenderness; and he who longs
> For happier love but finds unhappiness,
> And falls among the dreams the drowsy gods
> Breathe on the burnished mirror of the world
> And then smooth out with ivory hands and sigh.
> (Poems, 750)

The editors of Druid Craft observe that "Mirrors and their images are found in many forms throughout the genetic [manuscript] versions [of The Shadowy Waters] as symbols of the Danaan dream or the solipsism of Forgael" (Druid Craft, 27). They also note that the mirror is an image from occult tradition, that it can be found in the Golden Dawn materials, in Boehme, and in Blake. (See *Druid Craft*, 27; Regardie I, 203; Ellis and Yeats, *Blake*, I, 246ff; Yeats "Symbolism in Painting," 152 and "First Principles," 151.) Grossman quotes a passage from Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim that links the mirror image with the Sidhe, via occult tradition and the association of the Sidhe and air:

> [Air] is a vital spirit, passing through all beings, giving life and substance to all things, binding, moving and filling all things. . . . Also it receives into itself as it were a divine looking glass, the species of all things, as well as of all manner of speeches and retains them.

(*Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, ed. Whitehead [1898], bk I, chap. VI, 44, quoted in Grossman, 54-55.)

[420] Moore, *The Unicorn*, xvi.

[421] "William Blake and his Illustrations," 117. The vegetable glass is Blake's image. In Villiers's *Tribulat Bonhomet*, Césaire Lenoir discusses a particular instance of inverse correspondence of the microcosm to the macro, using the mirror image: "je suis, en tant que pensée, le miroir, la *Réflexion* des lois universelles, ou, selon l'expression des théologiens, 'je suis FAIT à l'image de Dieu!' --Comprendre, c'est le reflet de créer" (*Tribulat Bonhomet*, 124). A little earlier in the work Lenoir applies a related image to the whole of the sensible universe:

> Je vois des attributs de *forme*, de *couleur*, de *polarité*, de *pesanteur* réunis: j'appelle *bois*, un certain agrégat de ces qualités. Mais ce qui *soutient* ces qualités,--la SUBSTANCE, enfin,--que ces attributs couvrent de leur voile, où est-elle?...--Entre vos deux sourcils! Et nulle part! Vous voyez bien que la "Matière" en soi, n'est pas sensible! ne se pénètre pas! ne se révèle pas, et que la "Substance" est un être purement intellectuel dont le Monde sensible n'est qu'une forme négative, un repoussé. (*Tribulat Bonhomet*, 120-21)

[422] See *Druid Craft*, 28.

[423] Ibid.

[424] Olney, "The Esoteric Flower," 44. See the discussion of mosaic in my Chapter One, 61.

[425] Quoted in Ellmann, Identity, 81. Ellmann says the note is for a July 9, 1905 performance of The Shadowy Waters at the Abbey Theatre, but the editors of Druid Craft say there apparently was no such performance, that the programme note is from Inis Fail, No. 11 [Aug.], 1905, and was for the July 8 performance (See Druid Craft, 302, 302n).

[426] O'Donnell imagines Yeats's "glee when, late in life, he discovered a philosophically respectable precedent for his otherwise illogical insistence that both sides of [an] antinomy . . . are equally valid" ("Yeats as Adept," 78). This "respectable" precedent was Kant's antinomies.

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

[1] The publication of Ross Chambers' L'Ange et l'automate: variations sur le mythe de l'actrice de Nerval à Proust, Archives des Lettres Modernes, 5, No. 128 (Paris: Lettres Modernes, 1971), and of Deborah Conyngham's excellent study, Le Silence Eloquent: thèmes et structure de L'Eve future de Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, are perhaps signs that L'Eve future is about to receive the serious scholarly consideration it deserves.

[2] Villiers had formulated at least part of the concept of L'Eve future as early as 1874, for in "La Machine à gloire," one of the Contes cruels published in that year, he mentions "Vingt Andréides sorties des ateliers d'Edison" and adds a footnote that these are "Automates électro-humains, donnant, grâce à l'ensemble des découvertes de la science moderne, l'illusion complète de l'Humanité" (Oeuvres complètes, II, 93, 93n). (A number of scholars, including Maria Deenen have pointed out that the word "andréide" does not exist in French. The correct form is "l'androïde" [m]. See, for example, Deenen, 142.) The presence of these androids in "La Machine à gloire" is a before-the-fact fulfillment of Edison's prophecy in L'Eve future: "nul doute qu'il ne se fabrique bientôt des milliers de substrats andréides comme celui-ci--et que le premier industriel venu n'ouvre une manufacture d'idéals!" (L'Eve, 284). In 1877 an even more precise reference to the work in progress appeared in "Le Traitement du Docteur Chavassus" which was also reprinted in Contes cruels (as "Le Traitement du Docteur Tristan"): "L'Eve-nouvelle, machine électro-humaine (presque une bête!...), offrant le clichage du premier amour,--par l'étonnant Thomas Alva Edison, l'ingénieur américain, le Papa du Phonographe" (Oeuvre complètes, II, 346). Drougard believes that the original conception of L'Eve future dates from somewhere between 1867 and 1870. (See E. Drougard, "Villiers de l'Isle-Adam et Théophile Gautier," Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France, 39, No. 4 [oct.-dec., 1932], 517ff; and Deenen, 146.)

Although L'Eve future was not available in book form until 1886 when it was published by Brunhoff, it had appeared earlier in whole or in part in a number of periodicals. Under the title L'Eve nouvelle, the first book of the novel was serialized in fourteen parts in Le Gaulois, running almost daily from September 4, 1880, to September 18. Later that year L'Etoile Française began to publish it. With some confusion of chapter and installment numbers, almost all L'Eve nouvelle appeared in 46 parts between December 14, 1880 and February 4, 1881. The first complete publication of the work, retitled *L'Eve future*, appeared in weekly installments (with a few interruptions) in *La Vie Moderne* from July 18, 1885 until March 27, 1886. (*Le Succès* had announced several times in May and June 1885 that it would be publishing *L'Eve future*, but gave up the project when Villiers kept delaying.) In an appendix to their 1957 edition of the novel, Joseph Bollery and P.-J. Castex describe its early publishing history in some detail ("Composition et publication de *L'Eve future*," in *L'Eve future*, ed. J[oseph] Bollery and P.-J. Castex, Le Musée Insolite n.p.: Le Club du Meilleur Livre, 1957 331-47). Bollery has also published some of the same information in "Documents Biographiques inédits sur Villiers de l'Isle-Adam," *Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France*, 56, No. 1 (jan.-mar., 1956), 39-41 and 41n. He points out that there are many important variations between *L'Eve nouvelle* and *L'Eve future* and refers the reader to E. Drougard's article in the July 1949 issue of the *Bulletin du Bibliophile* for a study of the less important variations between the *Vie moderne* and Brunhoff versions of *L'Eve future* (Bollery, "Documents," 41). Just after Brunhoff published the work, an extract, "L'Auxiliatrice," appeared in the May 13, 1886 issue of *La Vogue* (see Joseph Bollery *Biblio-iconographie de Villiers de l'Isle-Adam* [Paris: Mercure de France, 1939], 42). *La Vie Populaire* reprinted the whole novel between April 25 and November 7, 1889 (Bollery, *Biblio-iconographie*, 38). In 1890, *L'Eve future* was reissued in book form by a new publisher, Librairie Charpentier. The novel formed Volume I of the Mercure de France *Oeuvres complètes* (1914).

Villiers changed his mind about the title of his novel several times. It was originally *L'Andréide paradoxale d'Edison* (*L'Eve* 431n). Although Villiers began publishing it in September 1880 as *L'Eve nouvelle*, in February 1880 he referred to it in correspondence as *L'Eve future* (*Correspondence*, I, 277), the final title, which did not appear in print until 1885.

[3] In *Villiers de l'Isle-Adam: révélateur du verbe* (Neuchatel: Messeiller, n.d.), André Lebois writes that Villiers's work "affirme un surréel qui est l'univers poétique" (Lebois, 14). Alain Mercier points out that, although Villiers does not use the word "correspondance" in the same manner as Swedenborg, Baudelaire or the symbolists, his use anticipates the "intersignes" of such authors as Breton, Maeterlinck, Jarry and Apollinaire (*Les Sources ésotériques et occultes de la poésie symboliste (1870-1914)*, Vol. I, *Le Symbolisme français* [Paris: Nizet, 1969], 155). In a short piece which appeared in the issue of *Le Goéland* devoted to Villiers and Charles Cros (3, No. 35 [1 août, 1938], 1), Théophile Briant draws attention to Villiers's important role as precursor: "Tout le monde lui doit, depuis certains romanciers académiques qui ont puisé dans le fonds Villiers le meilleur de leur inspiration jusqu'aux surréalistes, qui ont filtré fort habilement les innombrables richesses qui grouillent dans cette oeuvre." Deenen also links Villiers with the surrealists

because of the obsession with "le merveilleux" (see, for example, Deenen, 9-10). Villiers's relation to futurism and surrealism deserves detailed study.

[4] Maria Deenen says that Villiers loves science (Deenen, 139); Henry Laujol that he regards it with "une haine de moine" ("Villiers de l'Isle-Adam," Revue Politique et Littéraire: Revue Bleue, 3e série, 44, No. 12 [21 sept., 1889], 364). E. de Rougemont insists Villiers is putting science on trial (Villiers de l'Isle-Adam: biographie et bibliographie [Paris: Mercure de France, 1910], 266); whereas Léon Bloy believes L'Eve future is "un hommage au grand ingénieur américain," Thomas Alva Edison (La Résurrection de Villiers de l'Isle-Adam [Paris: Champion/Blaizot, 1906]; rpt. in Vol. IV of Oeuvres de Léon Bloy, ed. Joseph Bollery et Jacques Petit [Paris: Mercure de France, 1965], 326).

[5] Symons, "Villiers," Woman's World, 659. The tone of L'Eve future contributes to the difficulty of interpreting the novel. The light tone with which the book opens becomes serious, at times even brutal, especially in the sections which treat of the seductive powers of women. André Lebois writes about the tone of L'Eve future and Villiers's involvement in the story:

> Villiers parle pourtant du ton, "léger s'il en fut", de L'Eve Future. Qu'est-ce à dire, sinon qu'en rédigeant son livre, Villiers s'est pris à cette histoire où son propre coeur était si cruellement engagé, et n'a plus gardé de ses railleuses intentions primitives que quelques fariboles mises dans la bouche de l'inventeur, à titre de couleur locale et d'humeur anglo-saxonne, probablement? (Lebois, 199)

Although I agree with Lebois that Villiers does not always manage to maintain authorial distance from his work, I cannot concur with his judgment on Edison's "fariboles." The major portion of Deborah Conyngham's study is devoted to disputing the charge that any portion of L'Eve future is frivolous or superfluous. Approximately half the introduction to the Bollery and Castex edition of L'Eve future discusses what the editors feel were the reasons Villiers was "si cruellement engagé" in the work: they believe L'Eve future is founded on autobiography and related in part to Villiers's frustrated hopes to marry an English heiress, Anna Eyre Powells (see J[oseph] Bollery and P.-J. Castex, "Le Secret d'un grand livre," in L'Eve future, ed. J[oseph] Bollery and P.-J. Castex, 10-21). Miss Powells' name, at least, may have contributed to the names of two of the women in the novel: Annie (Any) Anderson and Alicia Clary. Pierre-Georges Castex treats L'Eve future as autobiography in his chapter on "Villiers de l'Isle-Adam et sa cruauté" in Le Conte fantastique en France de Nodier à Maupassant (Paris: Corti, c1951), 345-64. Castex goes so far as to see the disillusioned idealist, "le comte Celian Ewald," as an anagram for "le comte Villiers de l'Isle-Adam" because "Celian Ewald donne *Wilie de licle adan*" (Castex, *Conte fantastique*, 364n)! Max Daireaux is also among the critics who attribute an autobiographical base to *L'Eve future*. (See Max Daireaux, *Villiers de l'Isle-Adam*, Temps et Visages [Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, c1936], 408).

[6] Arthur Symons, *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*, rev. ed. (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1958, c1919), 27.

[7] See Raitt, 178.

[8] E. de Rougemont, 266.

[9] See Briant, "Villiers," 1; and Bornecque, "Villiers . . . martyr," lix.

[10] *Correspondance*, I, 285.

[11] Ibid., 262-63. Quoted in part in Bornecque, "Villiers . . . martyr," lvii; and without ellipses in Bollery and Castex, "Le Secret," 8-9.

[12] Conyngham, 99. Conyngham goes on to agree with Christiaan J.C. van der Meulen's conclusion that Villiers opposes not science, but the religion of science, not material progress, but the idolatrous worship of perpetual progress (see Christiaan Johannes Cornelis van der Meulen, *L'Idéalisme de Villiers de l'Isle-Adam* [Amsterdam: H.J. Paris, 1925], 65).

[13] A glance through the manuscript fragments included in the Appendix at the back of the Mercure de France edition of *L'Eve future* reveals the difficulty in determining whether Edison is speaking ironically in lauding the "great" achievements of modern civilization and science, or is speaking with the monstrous sincerity of a Tribulat Bonhomet. If the Edison of the fragments is serious, then Villiers completely reversed his attitude towards him in the final version. See, for example, *L'Eve*, 432-34.

[14] See the opening chapters of *L'Eve future*, especially page 15. Like his author, Villiers's Edison delights in puns. See especially Book 1, Chapter III. Conyngham stresses the significance of the play upon words to Villiers's philosophy. See Conyngham, passim, especially, 19-20.

[15] See *L'Eve future*, Book VI, Chapter III. Although definitely

fictitious, Villiers's portrait of Edison is remarkably close to the truth, but in certain respects only. Edison's biographer, Robert Conot writes:

> Edison's stories were droll and sometimes funny. He encouraged the press to inspect and write about his latest inventions. He spoke wittily and in the popular idiom. Superficially he was a reporter's delight. Yet he never allowed anyone to penetrate to the private Edison. His bonhomie and way with words obscured more than enlightened, and acted as a shield to keep the curious at bay.
>
> Edison's life resembled a drama on which the curtain fell whenever a climax approached; and the world was left to wonder what had happened. . . . Edison . . . was a lusty, crusty, hard-driving opportunistic, and occasionally ruthless Midwesterner, whose Bunyanesque ambition for wealth was repeatedly subverted by his passion for invention. He was complex and contradictory, an ingenious electrician, chemist, and promoter, but a bumbling engineer and businessman. (Robert Conot, A Streak of Luck [New York: Seaview Books, c1979], xv, xvii)

Villiers's Edison probably owes as much or more to another inventor as he does to Thomas Alva Edison: Charles Cros (1842-1888). Cros was a close friend of Villiers. He was a scientist, an inventor, a painter, and a writer. Cros experimented with colour photography and actually invented a phonograph sometime before Edison (see Lebois, 189, 191). Lebois writes, "Cros avait . . ., aux yeux de Villiers, le mérite d'incarner une certaine science, dont la fantaisie même garantissait les possibilités dans le domaine poétique" (Lebois, 190). Like Villiers, Cros was interested in the occult and, Lebois remarks, "manquait de la gravité indispensable à qui veut être considéré," for he frequently took refuge in "l'humour et la blague colossale" (Lebois, 194). Lebois concludes that although his name is not mentioned in L'Eve future, "La dédicace Aux rêveurs aux railleurs! s'applique si bien à Charles Cros! On peut admettre que l'Eve future, inspirée par son invention, lui est personnellement dédiée" (Lebois, 195). Lebois devotes a chapter to the relationship between Villiers and Cros: "Prélude à L'Eve future: l'amitié de Charles Cros," 189-95.

[16] See the incident about the train (L'Eve, 35-36).

[17] See L'Eve future, 28-29.

[18] Compare "La Machine à gloire," 77-97.

[19] See Jung, 109, figure 51.

[20] F.T. Flahiff, "Labyrinth: Some Notes on the Crafty Art of of Daedalus," White Pelican, 3, No. 1 (Winter, 1973), 16. Villiers's Edison is a Daedalus figure. Joseph Campbell's description of the ancient craftsman and inventor might have been written with "phonograph's papa" (L'Eve, 14) in mind:

> For centuries Daedalus has represented the type of the artist-scientist: that curiously disinterested, almost diabolic human phenomenon, beyond the normal bounds of social judgment, dedicated to the morals not of his time but of his art. He is the hero of the way of thought--singlehearted, courageous, and full of faith that the truth, as he finds it, shall make us free. (The Hero with a Thousand Faces, 2nd ed., Bollingen Series 17 [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968, c1949], 24)

[21] Stanislas Klossowski de Rola, Alchemy: The Secret Art (London: Thames and Hudson, c1973), 9.

[22] Although Edison has at least one child, in a reversal of the old saw about children, he is heard but not seen in the novel. A disembodied voice coming through the telephone and giving the impression "qu'un elfe invisible, caché dans l'air, répondait à un magicien" (L'Eve, 33), the child is but a very tenuous link with flesh and blood humanity. No mention is made of Edison's wife. The inventor has little contact with the world outside his laboratory. He communicates with it only when necessary, and then through the mechanical veil of pre-recorded messages played over the telephone, "car il dédaigne le plus possible de parler lui-même, excepté à lui-même" (L'Eve, 30). Edison's is the inverted, subjective world of the artist. Conyngham writes of his isolation and his deliberate use of instruments of communication as means of separating himself from the world. See Conyngham, 25-26.

[23] Conyngham contrasts Edison's science with that of the positivists:

> La science dans L'Eve future est la science idéale d'une philosophie positive et non positiviste.
>
> Les positivistes veulent réduire le mystère et la suggestivité de l'univers, de la nature, par leur manipulation de la science. Edison, par contre, cherche à augmenter ces qualités significatives du monde qui l'entoure. (Conyngham, 100)

[24] Eliane Maingot, Les Automates ([Paris]: Hachette, c1959), 6. Although it focusses on the automaton as toy, brief as it is (95 pages), Maingot's little history is very interesting. It contains a wealth of plates (many of them in colour), and a short bibliography.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid., 6-8.

[27] See also the manuscript fragment of L'Eve future, Appendice, 445.

[28] Michelet, 66. Deenen (142-43) mentions a number of important precursors of Villiers's android, both real and apocrophal. See L'Eve future, 121-22, for Edison's attitude to the automata which preceded his Hadaly. In his Introductory Essay to Three Gothic Novels (which includes Mary Shelley's Frankenstein), Mario Praz points to the strong eighteenth-century interest in the artificial creation of life, listing literary and scientific experiments in the field. See Mario Praz, Introductory Essay, in Three Gothic Novels, ed. Peter Fairclough (Harmondsworth, Mddx.: Penguin, 1968), 27-31. The most famous instance of the homunculus in literature is in Act II of Goethe's Faust, Part II. After he has been produced by Wagner in the alembic ("born but half in some prodigious way"), Homunculus seeks to "be corporated" fully in human form (Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Faust: A Tragedy, trans. Walter Arndt, ed. Cyrus Hamlin, Norton Critical Edition [New York: Norton, c1976], 208; unless otherwise indicated, all quotations from Faust are from this edition). Both Thales and Proteus inform Homunculus that he must move through what Cyrus Hamlin describes as "a process of organic evolution through stages of metamorphosis" (Faust, 210 n5). It is natural that Proteus, a shape-shifting seagod, should tell Homunculus,

> In the broad sea you must begin it!
> There first the tiny way you try,
> The tiniest life contently chewing,
> Thus you grow larger by and by
> And shape yourself for higher doing.
> (Faust, 208)

Since the alchemist's aim, as we saw in Chapter One, is to speed up the natural processes, the "thousand, countless thousand forms" (Faust, 210) of which Thales speaks is rather more than they might wish the subject of their Grand Oeuvre to move through; still the alchemists would approve of the evolutionary perspective of existence taken by Proteus and Thales. Raitt discusses Villiers's fascination with the Faust motif (see Raitt, 196-200). He concludes that

"L'Eve future est l'aboutissement de ses méditations sur ce thème qui n'a jamais cessé de l'obséder" (Raitt, 196).

[29] Piobb, II, 373. Piobb suggests that the ancient Egyptian custom of incestuous marriages between royal brothers and sisters was an application of the alchemical formula for the production of the homunculus, and that the Pharohs "suivaient, sans trop les comprendre, des traditions initiatiques . . ., pour avoir un 'enfant supérieur à ses parents'" (Piobb, II, 375).

[30] For details of Hadaly's construction, see especially Book VI.

[31] See especially Book VI, Chapter III. Mercury is, of course, actually used in various kinds of electrical equipment, including certain switches, lamps, and arcs. Edison locates Hadaly's domain "dans la foudre," and says she must be an angel, "si, comme l'enseigne notre Théologie, les anges ne sont que feu et lumière!" (L'Eve, 147, 278).

[32] Lévi, Dogme et rituel, II, 252. See also Drougard, "Villiers . . . et Eliphas Lévi," 529.

[33] Lévi, La Clef, 196.

[34] Lévi, La Clef, 206-07. See also ibid., 116, 212-13, 233-35; and Dogme et rituel, II, 165-69. Aleister Crowley calls Lévi's deciphering of the qabalistic/alchemical secret a "joke" in which "Lévi indicates that he really knew the Great Arcanum; but only those who also possess it can recognize it, and enjoy the joke" (Eliphas Lévi, The Key of the Mysteries, trans. Aleister Crowley [1959; rpt. New York: Weiser, 1970], 141n). Lévi and Villiers are not the only writers to connect alchemy with electricity. As Goethe's Homunculus struggles into existence,

> In the alembic's inmost member
> A glow is lit like living ember,
> Yes--like a glorious jewel's spark
> It shoots its flashes through the dark!
> A glare of dazzling white is sent! (Faust, 172)

In Part II of Strindberg's trilogy, To Damascus (1898), the Stranger conducts an alchemical quest that involves electrical experiments.

[35] Piobb, II, 375.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Jollivet-Castelot, 18, 20.

[38] Ibid., 18.

[39] In the same passage in which he says Hadaly must be an angel if it is true that angels are fire and light, Edison hints at Hadaly's "neuter-ness": "N'est-ce pas le baron de Swédenborg qui se permit, même, d'ajouter qu'ils[les anges] sont 'hermaphrodites et stériles'?" (*L'Eve*, 278). In an unpublished manuscript fragment it is Hadaly herself who establishes her link with the angels. Speaking to Ewald she says,

> Tu penses peut-être à des enfants?.. Ecoute! je ne serai pas jalouse, si c'est pour avoir des enfants que tu me trahis jamais! Car je ne puis exister un peu que parmi les anges, et les anges sont hermaphrodites et stériles, et je sais que l'amour que j'inspire n'a que faire des saintes conventions de la nature!... (*L'Eve*, 466)

[40] Edison says, "Hadaly, extérieure, n'est que la conséquence de l'intellectuelle Hadaly dont elle fut précédée en mon esprit" (*L'Eve*, 197).

[41] To counteract any tendency that his readers might have to view the negative component of life as insignificant, Villiers stresses its importance. Edison delivers a brief diatribe on the subject to Ewald:

> Le Néant! mais c'est *chose* si utile que Dieu lui-même ne dédaigna pas d'y recourir pour en tirer le monde: et l'on s'en aperçoit assez tous les jours. Sans le Néant, Dieu déclare, implicitement, qu'il lui eût été presque impossible de *créer* le Devenir des choses. Nous ne sommes qu'un "n'étant plus" perpétuel. Le Néant, c'est la Matière-négative, *sine qua non*, occasionnelle, sans laquelle nous ne serions pas ici à causer, ce soir. (*L'Eve*, 148-49)

[42] Castex, *Conte fantastique*, 363.

[43] Compare T.S. Eliot's famous image of the catalyst which provides an analogy for the impersonality of the poet ("Tradition and the Individual Talent," 54). In her discussion of Edison's laboratory, Conyngham draws attention especially to the different types of lighting under which we see the laboratory. She concludes not only

that the successive changes represent a chronological history of lighting from natural sunlight to artificial gas lighting and electricity, but that this history in turn reflects the progressive withdrawal of the divine creative light from man and man's subsequent reliance on the illumination of his own inventiveness (Conyngham, 109-12).

[44] In saying that the divine Word only wrote once, Edison is thinking of John 8:6 when the scribes and pharisees confront Jesus with the woman taken in adultery, hoping to trap him into a statement against the Mosaic law. "But Jesus stooped down, and with _his_ finger wrote on the ground, _as though he heard them not_" (King James version).

[45] Villiers, "Les Expériences du Dr. Crookes," in _L'Amour suprême_, in Vol. V of _Oeuvres complètes_, 172, 173. Like Villiers, Yeats took an interest in Sir William Crookes's work. In the introduction to _The Resurrection_ published in _Wheels and Butterflies_ (1934), for instance, Yeats mentions reading Crookes's _Studies in Psychical Research_ (see _Plays_, 935; and also _Plays_, 571).

[46] Although it is a "spirit-photo" of Yeats, and not strictly a photograph of the odic light, Plate I in Harper's _Yeats and the Occult_ (opposite page 122) is an interesting example of related research. In this photo a luminous disembodied head floats above that of Yeats. Yeats read Baron von Reichenbach's work on the odic force, _Physico-physiological Researches on the Dynamics of Magnetism_ . . ., and incorporated references to it in _The Speckled Bird_ (70), _Autobiographies_ (90), and a footnote to Lady Gregory's _Visions and Beliefs_ (quoted by O'Donnell in a note to _The Speckled Bird_, 70n.

[47] Jollivet-Castelot, 282-83. The quotation in the final paragraph is from Eliphas Lévi's _Histoire de la magie_.

[48] Villiers had a tendency to spell English names phonetically. Although Mistress Anderson's given name does occur in the novel as "Annie," the more frequent spelling is "Any." To avoid confusion with the adjective, I shall use the more common English spelling except when quoting Villiers directly.

[49] Raitt, 201.

[50] Gustave Kahn, "Le Roman chimérique," _La Nouvelle Revue_, N.S., 26, No. 104 (1 fév., 1904), 370.

[51] Lévi, Dogme et rituel, II, 252-53. In a footnote to his translation of Dogme et rituel, A.E. Waite quarrels with Lévi's understanding of magnetism:

> A magnetic subject in the experiments of Mesmer was not a subject possessed by an elementary spirit, and the form in which Lévi expresses his notion is little short of nonsense. If he means to affirm that elementary spirits took possession of magnetized subjects in operations of old Magic, the challenge against him would be to produce his evidence. There is none in the known records.

(Eliphas Lévi, Transcendental Magic: Its Doctrine and Ritual, trans. Arthur Edward Waite [1896; new ed., 1968; rpt. New York: Weiser, 1972], 332n.) Although he is not concerned with the subject of magnetism, Jollivet-Castelot agrees with Lévi that a prime component in the homunculus was the elemental spirit (Jollivet-Castelot, 305n).

[52] Raitt, 196n.

[53] See this chapter, 250.

[54] Conyngham, 146. See L'Eve future, 382ff.

[55] See L'Eve future, 375ff, 398, 400, 415.

[56] Raitt, 202.

[57] Raitt writes, "Villiers proclame donc triomphalement sa conviction que le surnaturel échappera toujours à tout contrôle rationnel ou scientifique" (Raitt, 202).

[58] Note the constant references to the jewels worn by Hadaly; they are literally the "touchstones" that transform her from inanimate static mechanism to living dynamic being. (See especially, L'Eve, 161-66.)

[59] See L'Eve, 204.

[60] Emphasis mine. Contrast Hadaly's neuterness which is a positive feature, the result of a creative rather than destructive duality.

[61] See *L'Eve*, 215ff.

[62] Yeats, *Fairy and Folk Tales*, 76.

[63] Bürgisser briefly discusses the attraction of opposites as "une autre loi de la nature humaine" (Bürgisser, 94).

[64] Evelyn's surname is particularly fitting: Habal is Hebrew for vanity. Both Maria Deenen and André Lebois refer to Ecclesiastes: "Habal, habalim, vêk'kôl habal" (Deenen, 35n; Lebois, 204; see also Bürgisser, 96, 117). Edison quotes the passage early in the novel: "Vanité des vanités! tout est, bien décidément, vanité" (*L'Eve*, 47). Contrast Hadaly's name which, Edison tells us, is Iranian for "Ideal" (*L'Eve*, 152). Ross Chambers attributes to Mme. M. Maclean recognition of a visual pun on Hadaly and Habal: the reversal of "d" and "b" suggests the opposites of character contained within the names themselves ("ideal" and "vanity"). Chambers also notes the pun in English on "Evelyn" and "evil" (Chambers, *L'Ange*, 42).

[65] See *L'Eve*, 214.

[66] In *L'Ange et l'automate* Chambers points out that this view of women extends far beyond these two characters of Villiers's. It is an integral part of that aspect of the "poétique de la femme" (*L'Ange*, 74) which he terms "le mythe de l'actrice":

> Ce parallèle, imposé aux poètes par le mythe de l'actrice, entre l'esthétique et l'érotique, sera un thème fondamental de l'étude qu'on va lire, car il est impliqué depuis toujours par le mythe de la Muse.
>
> Ce mythe permet d'aller plus loin. L'identité qu'il suppose entre la femme et l'oeuvre d'art, entre objet aimé et objet esthétique, ne suggère-t-elle pas qu'à un niveau sans doute très profond la femme est prise comme une "création" de l'homme? Elle est créée par l'amour comme elle est créée par l'art, et peu importe que la création soit de type transcendant (Eurydice) ou immanent (Galatée). Dans la mesure où Eve paraît symboliser ainsi toute la créativité humaine, toute notre culture, il semble que le mythe de l'actrice doive faire pressentir une conclusion tant soit peu alarmante en ce qui concerne la "pathologie" social de l'homme moderne. (*L'Ange*, 20)

In "L'Automate: conte philosophique," Rémy de Gourmont presents a study of social pathology that is interesting in the present context. The cynicism of one of the characters, M. Laube, leads him to such statements as, "Infirmité humaine d'en revenir toujours à ratiociner sur les deux seuls êtres qui n'existent pas: la femme, Dieu!" "Dieu, c'est l'Inconscient, l'Infini automate"; and "La femme est un automate" ("L'Automate: conte philosophique," Revue Politique et Littéraire: Revue Bleue, 3e série, 26, No. 4 [27 juillet, 1889], 167, 168). Woman is an automaton, Laube says, because she is soulless, a doll or toy made only for love and reproduction and having the reasoning powers of a machine. Laube's thesis becomes an obsession with his friend, Mérillon, who begins to find women revolting. He eventually goes mad, stabs his mistress to death and insists that he has done no wrong because he has merely killed an automaton.

[67] See L'Eve, 23.

[68] See L'Eve, 61. Compare the description of Margaret in Yeats's novel, The Speckled Bird:

> She has seen at Rome, in her mother's house, wits and famous men gather about some beautiful woman and go away from her thinking it was she who had been beautiful and wise. Every word one says to her has its response in some note of sadness or merriment in her voice. Yes, she has mastered the subtle artifice of beauty. She can make her mind reflect everything that comes before it, and yet makes one believe, by making one more interested in the image than in the thought, that she has added to all one has told her some new and delightful thought. (The Speckled Bird, 23; see also 163)

[69] See L'Eve, 62.

[70] Piobb, II, 343.

[71] See also L'Eve, 64-67, 72-77. Compare Yeats's poem, "The Hero, the Girl, and the Fool" (Poems, 447-49). The Girl concludes that we are all loved for an image someone has of us, and "That only God has loved us for ourselves" (Poems, 448; see also, "For Anne Gregory," Poems, 492). Conyngham quotes part of the passage from L'Eve future found on pages 135-36, concluding that

> La réalité pour Lord Ewald est l'Illusion personnelle qu'il a déjà préférée à l'illusion décevante

> et terrestre de la belle femme. Déjà, il remplace l'âme médiocre d'Alicia par une vérité idéale. Ce que propose Edison, c'est la séparation scientifique de l'âme et du corps pour donner à Lord Ewald l'occasion de "vivifier" l'ombre qu'il aime. Il s'agit de faire un double de la présence d'Alicia, sans sa médiocrité. (Conyngham, 64)

Knowles (179ff) and Deenen (155n) draw attention to Maurice Beaubourg's play, L'Image. Originally produced and published in 1894, it is an extended explication of the dominance of image or illusion over reality in L'Eve future. L'Image illustrates the tragic consequences which can result when pursuit of the ideal takes one "à ce point où l'illusion seule plaît" (L'Image [Paris: Ollendorff, 1894], 15). Marcel's obsession with the idealized image he has of his wife, Jeanne, makes her jealous of this image and leads him to reject and eventually murder the real woman as the illusion assumes greater and greater reality in both their minds and all but materializes on stage. Beaubourg acknowledges his debt to L'Eve future by referring to it in the opening scene. It is possible that Villiers's conte "Véra," may also have been an influence on the play.

Raitt devotes a chapter to "L'Illusionnisme" in Villiers's work. He quotes a passage from Isis in which Tullia ponders the strange love Wilhelm has for her and concludes that it will soon be a love for a "fantôme," for his subjective image of what she is, and not for the real Tullia. See Raitt, 255, and Isis, Vol. IX of Oeuvres complètes, 214-15.

[72] Hadaly and Alicia, Sowana and Annie, are images of the double, two souls sharing one body. This is the converse of the situation underlying Yeats's "Anayusha and Vijaya" where two bodies share one soul. The two situations nonetheless illustrate basically the same tug-of-war between spiritual and material, subjective and objective.

[73] Ewald describes the completion of Edison's task as the accomplishment of "le grand Oeuvre, l'Idéal électrique" (L'Eve, 362).

[74] "Souvenir," 98.

[75] Jollivet-Castelot, 304n.

[76] "Tramer" is an interesting choice of word for it simultaneously evokes both an ancient and a modern craft of special significance in this context: Clotho's weaving, and photo-engraving. Compare Edison's "photosculpture," his use of "action photochromique"

to reproduce flesh tones, his use of printer's imagery in reference to Hadaly, and his interest in photography.

[77] Hadaly tells Ewald he must protect her from his reason (L'Eve, 384).

[78] Bürgisser describes Villiers's concept of love in terms of an encounter between the self and the other in which the self is projected into the love object:

> l'amoureux, c'est celui qui porte dans son âme le sentiment vierge d'un amour sublime à venir. L'objet de ses désirs existe "prénatalement" dans son imagination, et il le revêt de toutes les beautés que les désirs de son âme lui inspirent. L'objet qu'il cherche n'est donc autre qu'une image intérieure, l'idée idéale qu'il se fait de la Femme, son anima, dirait-on aujourd'hui. Il s'agit donc, à la vérité, d'une partie de lui-même que l'homme cherche à réaliser dans l'objet de son amour. La femme qu'il choisit, c'est celle qui se conforme le plus à cette femme idéale qu'il porte dans son âme. Ce qu'il aime, dans cette femme choisie, ce n'est donc pas elle, l'autre, mais c'est sa propre image idéalisée qu'il a rêvée, c'est une partie de lui-même, c'est lui-même en réalité. L'autre, l'objet aimé, n'intervient et ne participe que dans la mesure où il se conforme à l'idéal formé par l'amoureux: c'est cette partie seule que l'amoureux en tient pour réelle, tout le reste, tout ce qui est vraiment "autre" chez l'autre, est rejeté, exclu.
> (Bürgisser, 77)

[79] See L'Eve, 382 and Conyngham 94-95, 148-49.

[80] Compare Sara's recognition that neither she nor Axël will ever be able to escape the power of the other, and that, in particular, she is "inoubliable" (Axël, 236-37).

[81] Conyngham describes the unity Ewald will achieve with Hadaly:

> C'est l'unité d'un seul esprit qui dialogue avec lui-même au moyen d'une femme-miroir. C'est l'unité qui ne peut jamais se rediviser, étant celle d'une seule conscience" (Conyngham, 89)

Conyngham goes on to quote the passage from L'Eve future in which Edison replies to Ewald's fear that to love Hadaly would be to love a zero:

> Aimer zéro, dites-vous? Encore une fois, qu'importe, si vous êtes l'unité placée devant ce zéro, comme vous l'êtes, d'ores et déjà, devant tous les zéros de la vie--et si c'est, enfin, le seul qui ne vous désenchante ni ne vous trahisse? (L'Eve, 261-62; quoted in Conyngham, 90)

[82] See Axël, 237, 270-71.

[83] Note the implication of death and transcendence in the "senteur d'asphodèles," the flower of the underworld.

[84] Conyngham, 149.

[85] See Conyngham, 114-15. Chambers' monograph, L'Ange et l'automate touches on the "intersection de trois rêveries--sur la femme, sur le langage, sur le théâtre--[où] se situe le mythe de l'actrice" (Chambers, L'Ange, 75). Conyngham's chapter, "Le Masque, l'art de Villiers," (139-54) treats the themes of actress and theatre in L'Eve future.

[86] See also L'Eve, 385.

[87] On the importance of the limitless in Villiers's philosophy, see Bürgisser, passim, especially 23-34. We should bear in mind that Yeats praised Villiers, among other things, for embodying the quest after the ideal in impersonal characters, "persons from whom has fallen all even of personal characteristic except a thirst for that hour when all things shall pass away like a cloud, and a pride like that of the Magi following their star over many mountains" ("The Autumn of the Body," 190).

[88] See also L'Eve, 377. A passage in the manuscript fragments of L'Eve future included in the Appendix to the Mercure de France edition, speaks more directly of Ewald's transcendence to "l'au-delà":

> Ecoute, il faut que je [Hadaly] te dise! N'est-ce pas, c'est ma virginité qui te rend pâle? Mais, . . . elle est éternelle et tu garderas son reflet dans ton âme à travers l'illusion des années!.. Songe que si tu m'acceptes pour esclave, tu ne vieilliras plus, pas plus que moi!

> Tu disparaîtras en ma beauté sans mourir, ô
> mon amant! D'abord je ne veux pas que tu meurs!
> tu n'en as plus le droit, m'ayant écoutée! Tu
> ne mourras pas, te dis-je, tu ne mourras pas,
> mais nous serons comme des Dieux, sachant le bien
> et le mal. (L'Eve, 466)

[89] See L'Eve, 133.

[90] Fernand Clerget, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, La Vie Anecdotique et Pittoresque des Grands Ecrivains (Paris: Société des Editions Louis-Michaud, n.d.), 143.

[91] The scene in which we first meet Alicia, the physical model for Hadaly, includes a number of associations with the ideal and ~~the~~ world of faery. Alicia herself wears a rose in her hair and sparkles with diamonds (L'Eve, 328,333). When she sits down with Edison and Ewald to eat "un souper de féerie" her place is marked by a "touffe de boutons de roses thé, sertie comme par des elfes" (L'Eve, 330, 331). The trio drink a toast and the atmosphere takes on a peculiar tone: "Une impression de solennité secrète jusqu'à l'occulte flottait dans l'entrecroisement des regards; tous trois étaient pâles; la grande aile du Silence passa un instant sur eux" (L'Eve, 332). Villiers is setting the scene for the transformation of the ideal from potential (Alicia) to actual (Hadaly).

[92] Raitt, 202.

[93] Fairy and Folk Tales, 11, 287.

[94] Jollivet-Castelot, 304-05n.

[95] Ewald's family motto suggests he is a man above the masses: "Etiamsi omnes, ego non" (L'Eve, 347): "Although everyone else may, I will not."

[96] See above, Chapter Two, 175ff. Conyngham comments on part of this passage from L'Eve future: "C'est par l'imaginaire ('cette substance infinie') que l'En dedans, libéré même momentanément de son esclavage à la raison, peut toucher enfin à l'Au-delà, ou, plus exactement, en recevoir les véritables reflets" (Conyngham, 94). In his catechetical description of the "médiateur plastique" formed from the astral light, Lévi provides a commentary on the world of the crucible, relating it to magnetism:

> R[éponse. L'homme . . .] a en lui une âme spirituelle, un corps matériel et un médiateur plastique. . . .
>
> D[émande]. Donnez-nous quelques notions sur ce médiateur plastique.
>
> R. Il est formé de lumière astrale ou terrestre et en transmet au corps humain la doube aimantation. L'âme, en agissant sur cette lumière par ses volitions, peut la dissoudre ou la coaguler, la projeter ou l'attirer. Elle est le miroir de l'imagination et des rêves. Elle réagit sur le système nerveux, et produit ainsi les mouvements du corps. Cette lumière peut se dilater indéfiniment et communiquer ses images à des distances considérables, elle aimante les corps soumis à l'action de l'homme, et peut, en se resserrant, les attirer vers lui. Elle peut prendre toutes les formes évoquées par la pensée et, dans les coagulations passagères de sa partie rayonnante, apparaître aux yeux et offrir même une sorte de résistance au contact. . . .
>
> D. Qu'est-ce que le magnétisme animal?
>
> R. C'est l'action d'un médiateur plastique sur un autre pour dissoudre ou coaguler. En augmentant l'élasticité de la lumière vitale et sa force de projection, on l'envoie aussi loin qu'on veut et on la retire toute chargée d'images, mais il faut que cette opération soit favorisée par le sommeil du sujet, qu'on produit en coagulant davantage la partie fixe de son médiateur. (Lévi, *La Clef*, 110-12; see also *La Clef*, 115-16)

[97] The role of the artificial arm in Edison's laboratory is very similar. Chambers sees the arm as the central symbol in *L'Eve future* (Chambers, *L'Ange*, 47). He feels it introduces the question of a connection between art and the occult: "Si loin d'être un simple support du rêve subjectif de l'homme, l'objet fabriqué par lui--bras artificiel, Andréide, signes de toute espèce--avait un mystérieux pouvoir médiumnique?" (*L'Ange*, 48). Conyngham describes the effect of the artificial arm: "Créé pour donner une sensation puissante et convaincante de vie, le bras finit par sembler *attirer* des messages de l'Au-delà" (Conyngham, 124). Conyngham devotes a chapter, "La Forme creuse" (121-37), to the structured vacuum that attracts an appropriate content.

Since "La nature a horreur du vide," then "Un vide doit être comblé, et un vide créé dans une forme particulière attirera un contenu d'une nature semblable, 'qui lui est homogène.' Mieux la forme vide sera définie, plus l'âme qui viendra comme réponse à cet appel d'air sera individuelle" (Conyngham, 132). Compare Yeats's discussion of the link between imagination and the occult spirits in the crucible of the Great Memory.

[98] Conyngham describes this frontier region as "cette région liminaire où se touchent l'Au-delà et l'En dedans" (Conyngham, 146). She draws attention to the passage in L'Eve future in which Hadaly tells Ewald "Je suis, vers toi, l'envoyée de ces régions sans bornes dont l'Homme ne peut entrevoir les pâles frontières qu'entre certains songes et certains sommeils" (L'Eve, 383; quoted in Conyngham, 146n). Conyngham also quotes from Bürgisser concerning the twilight time between two worlds when man is in "cet état privilégié de la demi-veille, état auquel nous avons donné le nom de rêverie. Dans cet état, les entités subconscientes de la transcendence peuvent émerger à la superficie de la conscience" (Bürgisser, 29; quoted in Conyngham, 146n).

[99] Compare Hanrahan's vision.

[100] Edison uses this term in reference to the fixing of the divine voice in a sound recording, but it is perhaps even more appropriate to apply it to Hadaly, who incorporates the ideal as it appeals to all the senses.

[101] Conyngham devotes the first chapter of her work to the study of "La Signification" in L'Eve future (Conyngham, 17-40). She sees the novel as Villiers's analysis of the problem of alienation from the divine in the post-lapsarian world, "un monde purement physique dépourvu de signification réelle" (Conyngham, 17). There is a split between sign and sense, between "extériorité" or the purely material and "intériorité" or "signification." L'Eve future suggests a close parallel between the natures of woman and language, both of which reflect

> l'impression cruelle de pure extériorité que donne l'univers entier depuis le départ de Dieu. La présence de Dieu assurait la présence dans le monde physique d'une signification. Ainsi, le ciel, qui "signifiait" autrefois "Dieu" (car c'était là qu'il habitait), est vide maintenant, comme l'est "la forme déserte" de la femme. Ce qui manque à l'Eve transformée [la femme après la chute], c'est l'âme idéale qui, au commencement, l'avait animée. . . .

> L'extériorité féminine, le corps, correspond aux vibrations physiques et extérieures de la parole; l'âme de la femme représente la signification de la parole, c'est-à-dire son intériorité. L'absence de l'élément non-physique, ou métaphysique, que ce soit âme ou sens, symbolise parfaitement la rupture dont il est question. (Conyngham, 17-18)

The question of parallels between life and language recurs throughout Conyngham's work.

[102] Compare Tribulat Bonhomet, 154. Claire Lenoir asks about the "persistence de la personnalité" in life and death: "Où le moi est-il bien lui-même? Quand? A quelle HEURE de la vie? Votre moi de ce soir est-il celui qui sera demain? celui d'il y a cinquante ans? -- Non."

[103] Ecclesiastes, 1:9. The theme of Ecclesiastes, with its cyclic return and "vain" monotony, runs as a motif throughout L'Eve future. We have already noted the link between Evelyn Habal and the Old Testament book. Compare the Yeatsian concept of recurrence embodied, for example, in "The Wanderings of Oisin," which Yeats himself describes as an allegory of "vain gaiety, vain battle, vain repose" (Poems, 629).

[104] Compare Henri Clouard's description of the poet's role as magician: "Engagé parmi les ombres mouvantes auxquelles le vulgaire (et c'est nous tous) s'attache, il [le poète] les écarte, lui, il s'en délivre, il capte la vraie réalité promise aux privilégiés, puis, tout-puissant de magie, il l'embaume dans le charme des mots, enferme le trésor dans sa formule énigmatique, forge une clef unique et indestructible" (Histoire de la littérature française du symbolisme à nos jours, rev. ed. [Paris: Albin Michel c1947], 47).

[105] Compare Yeats's description of those to whom the beings from the crucible relate: "Natural men, who are simple-minded and childlike, innocent and sincere" (Fairy and Folk Tales, 287).

[106] Ross Chambers, "De grands yeux dans l'obscurité, regard scientifique et vision occulte dans Claire Lenoir et L'Eve Future," Australian Journal of French Studies, 9, No. 3 (Sept.-Dec., 1972), 309-10. Chambers draws distinctions as well as parallels between the two types of vision, noting that the medium's vision is natural and passive, whereas the technologically extended vision of

the scientist is artificial and active, even indiscreet (see Chambers, "De grands yeux," 311; see also Conyngham, 100).

[107] Chambers, "De grands yeux," 321.

[108] Tribulat Bonhomet, 201.

[109] See ibid., 203-04. Claire's husband, Césaire, who was "hanté par un cannibale!" had premonitions of his fate. See Tribulat Bonhomet, 104 and Chapter XIV, 156ff.

[110] Conyngham points out that the grotesque and infernal nature of Claire's dying vision is a sign of her damnation for adultery: the indelible impression left on Claire's soul by her vision "équivaut à sa punition éternelle. Elle devra garder toujours cette vision horrible, comme d'autres [par exemple Guilhem Kerlis dans "Le Meilleur Amour"] auront une vision plus pure qui leur donnera la joie infinie" (Conyngham, 73, 73n). Compare Yeats's concept of purgatorial vision and re-enactment in the period between death and rebirth. See, for example, "The Soul in Judgment," 219-240 of A Vision; see also my Chapter Four, passim.

[111] Tribulat Bonhomet, 204.

[112] Chambers, "De grands yeux," 310.

[113] Although her interpretation of their significance is rather different from mine, Conyngham also stresses the importance of the stars as theme in L'Eve future (see Conyngham, 37-39). She regards "la Voie lactée" as a play upon words, for the stars are a "voix" conveying a message to those who, like Hadaly, are able to look beyond the visible starlight to the hidden meaning. Like women and language, with their deceptive surfaces veiling corrupt or dead interiors, the stars "démontrent que l'extériorité continue à exister même si son sens est parti" (Conyngham, 37).

[114] Compare Yeats's poems "The Mother of God" (Poems, 499) and "A Nativity" (Poems, 625). Images in these poems suggest Christ is the incarnation of an astral being begotten by the Word upon Mary. In a note to The Winding Stair and Other Poems Yeats explains,

> In "The Mother of God" the words "a fallen flare through the hollow of an ear" are, I am told, obscure. I had in my memory Byzantine mosaic pictures of the Annunciation, which show a line drawn from a

> star to the ear of the Virgin. She conceived of the Word, and therefore through the ear a star fell and was born. (*Poems*, 832)

The image in "A Nativity" is contained in the first two lines:

> What woman hugs her infant there?
> Another star has shot an ear. (*Poems*, 625)

[115] Technology is not, of course, restricted to preserving the ideal, Eternal Beauty; it may be used to fix whatever the artist/technician desires to preserve. We have already seen that although Evelyn Habal, personification of evil and ugliness, is dead, Edison has captured her image and preserved it for posterity on a moving picture film.

[116] Compare Yeats's golden form "set upon a golden bough" (*Poems*, 408), one of the few images in Yeats's work which might be seen to represent the felicitous wedding of art and technology.

[117] In her discussion of the theatrical theme in *L'Eve future*, Conyngham comments that

> Le parfait théâtre est dès lors le modèle de l'art. Le théâtre doit être le temps suspendu, "l'instant figé", défiant le changement physique. Edison veut transformer la vie en art; pour la première fois [avec l'andréide], l'humanité possède des moyens de clicher les doubles des formes belles et changeantes, les sensations de l'instant de transparence, pour les répéter à jamais. La science aide à réaliser le rêve du dramaturge. Le double vide, la matière constante, le dialogue inscrit d'avance, l'isolement privilégié du monde intérieur et personnel, voilà un théâtre sans désillusion, le moment le plus révélateur de la vie [la plus belle heure de l'amour] traduit dans un contexte de permanence assurée. (Conyngham, 149)

[118] Henri Clouard writes of *L'Eve future* that

> . . . Hadaly, extraordinaire Andréide née en matière pure du cerveau de l'ingénieur et que pourtant le génie a dotée de la plus haute séduction non seulement du corps mais de l'âne, a consolé, enivré Lord Ewald, lui a rendu son ciel perdu...

> Hélas, un naufrage engloutiera cette suprême espérance; le voile de l'invisible, un instant soulevé, retombera. (Clouard, 34-35)

[119] When Ewald denies being Prometheus, Edison informs him that "tout homme a nom Prométhée sans le savoir" (L'Eve, 135).

[120] Raitt, 198-99.

[121] Chambers, "De grands yeux," 324-25.

[122] Raitt himself acknowledges that the Faustian element is much stronger in the early Etoile Française version than it is in later editions. He judges the move away from Faust to be a flaw in the work which resulted from Villiers's attempts in the last few years of his life to eliminate from his writings all signs of heterodoxy. See Raitt, 200.

[123] Cirlot, 6.

[124] Conyngham draws attention to an article by André Lebois which I have not had an opportunity to examine: "En relisant L'Eve future de Villiers de l'Isle-Adam," in La Revue de la Méditerranée, 19, No. 2-3 (mars-juin, 1950), 181-215. Lebois says that L'Eve future centres on a struggle between God and Satan and that the frequent allusions to Der Freischütz support his position. Like Raitt and Chambers, Lebois feels that the conclusion of the novel is a form of punishment for Edison and Ewald for having presumed to rival God in their attempt to create life. (See Conyngham, 107-09). Conyngham is only partly in agreement with Lebois:

> La punition: tous les efforts de l'homme pour se tirer de sa condition déchue le révèlent comme déchu. Telle sera la conclusion nécessaire de L'Eve future, nous sommes d'accord avec Lebois sur ce point. Mais il est également vrai que dans l'élan vers l'Idéal permis par l'Eve nouvelle, si éphémère soit-il, l'homme semble enfin atteindre à des hauteurs inouïes. On a l'impression que Hadaly, une fois réveillée au château de Lord Ewald en Angleterre, aurait ouvert des perspectives sur l'Au-delà encore plus extraordinaires qu'elle ne l'avait déjà fait pendant sa courte existence. Ainsi L'Eve future possède ces deux traits caractéristiques de l'oeuvre satanique: elle s'achève par

> un échec qui résulte d'une loi propre au genre, mais elle laisse tout de même ce soupçon dans l'esprit du lecteur que l'expérience en question était possible après tout, et que le "Fatum", loin d'être imposé par une logique sans défaut, est un peu trop despotique. (Conyngham, 108-09)

In the conclusion to her study, Conyngham sums up her position on the ending of L'Eve future:

> La fin du roman est-elle une nouvelle rechute? Nous croyons que non, car Hadaly avait déjà laissé Lord Ewald entrevoir une réalité supérieure où il s'est reconnu. Sa mort, bien que triste, n'a pas été en vain. Nous sommes d'accord avec Bürgisser que Lord Ewald se suicidera après tout, mais que ce sera le suicide qu'il a déjà accepté en principe en préférant Hadaly au monde des vivants. Il mourra avec une vision de l'Au-delà et non le désespoir qu'Alicia lui avait inspiré. S'il est vrai qu'il faut mourir pour conserver la vision momentanée, il est également vrai qu'il ne faut pas mourir avant la vision, car c'est trop tôt. Hadaly est venue pour sauver Lord Ewald d'une mort prématurée qui lui aurait volé son destin infini. La mort sans la vision est une mort définitive. (Conyngham, 163)

[125] Conyngham writes of Hadaly as uniting somewhat different aspects of past and future: "elle est l'Eve future, non création mais recréation selon un mythe [celui d'Eden]; elle représente ce passé, reformulé et projeté dans le futur: l'Andréide personnifie l'unité perdue et elle est pleine de promesses futures" (Conyngham, 14).

[126] Conyngham draws attention to this passage which, she notes, illustrates "le côté de Villiers qui veut essayer la réalisation des rêves sur la terre quoique brièvement" (Conyngham, 38). See also Raitt, 259.

[127] "The Autumn of the Body," 189-93.

[128] See Conyngham, 25n.

[129] See L'Eve, Book VII, Chapter III.

[130] On the vertigo experienced by those who look into the unknown, see Emile Baumann, "L'Artificiel dans la littérature: Villiers de l'Isle Adam [sic]," *La Minerve Française*, 1 (1919), 815.

[131] Conyngham, 149. Compare René Martineau's statement that "*L'Eve future* est une définition palpable de l'Art, de son but et de son charme" ("Victor-Emile Michelet et le premier comité Villiers," *Bretagne*, 17, No. 163 [août, 1938], 216).

[132] Compare the origins of the word "symbol." The *Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* states that "symbol" is derived from the Greek *súmbolon* meaning "mark, token, ticket, watchword, outward sign, covenant." The noun is related to the verb *sumbállein*: "put together." When making contracts, the Greeks were in the habit of breaking coins in two and using the halves (the *súmbola*) as tokens of the contract (see Norman Friedman, "Symbol," in *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, ed. Alex Preminger [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965], 833; and Elder Olson, "A Dialogue on Symbolism," in *Critics and Criticism Ancient and Modern*, ed. R.S. Crane [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952], 571). There is, then, a material object with a certain intrinsic worth. The ordinary function of this object is temporarily disregarded, and its usual value greatly augmented, when it is used to betoken something other than itself. This other something we might qualify as non-material since, although a contract may involve, for example, significant sums of money, the pledge itself is not "concrete" except through its witnesses the half-coins. The word "betoken" is vital, for if the half-coin is not used as a token of something, it is not a *súmbolon*, but merely a broken coin.

[133] See Yeats, "The Moods," in *Essays and Introductions*, 195, and "Symbolism in Painting," 149. For convenience when discussing the symbol I shall use the terms image and mood for its material and immaterial components, although this is rather misleading because the use of two terms implies a dichotomy of the "two parts" of a symbol which is belied by its intrinsic unity. As we shall see, Hadaly is "UNE dualité," simultaneously image and mood.

[134] Conyngham discusses the importance to Villiers of the physical, or exteriority, taking Bürgisser to task for denying its significance. See Conyngham, 150-54. In "The Symbolism of Poetry," Yeats declares that "an emotion does not exist, or does not become perceptible among us, till it has found its expression, in colour or in sound or in form, or in all of these" ("The Symbolism of Poetry," 157).

[135] In "Symbolism in Painting" Yeats writes about a symbolist painter who had objected to the use of "a lily, or a rose, or a poppy . . . to express purity, or love, or sleep, because he thought such emblems were allegorical, and had their meaning by a traditional and not by a natural right." Yeats replied

> that the rose, and the lily, and the poppy were so married, by their colour and their odour and their use, to love and purity and sleep, or to other symbols of love and purity and sleep, and had been so long a part of the imagination of the world, that a symbolist might use them to help out his meaning without becoming an allegorist. ("Symbolism in Painting," 147; emphasis mine)

[136] Quoted in Conyngham, 144.

[137] Suzanne K. Langer, Philosophy in a New Key (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), 70.

[138] Compare Yeats's statement that symbols "evoke an emotion which cannot be evoked by any other arrangement of colours and sounds and forms" ("The Symbolism of Poetry," 156).

[139] After quoting this passage, Conyngham comments, "Il faut que Lord Ewald se soumette à cette mystérieuse réunion de son rêve et de l'absolu. Tous les masques superposés qu'il rencontre défient l'analyse de la raison" (Conyngham, 147).

[140] See L'Eve, 105, 157. Compare "Peintures décoratives": "cette magique impression où la nature apparaît comme transfigurée par l'atmosphère idéale que l'Art seul peut répandre sur les choses" ("Peintures décoratives," 153).

[141] "Peintures décoratives," 153.

[142] Chambers notes that the role of Pygmalion, which we have seen Edison assigns to Ewald and all humanity, when transferred to the aesthetic sphere, leads to the conclusion that "c'est le lecteur qui est chargé de vivifier la création de l'auteur. Il serait plus juste, toutefois, de dire que pour Hadaly Pygmalion est un être double, que la création résulte ici de la collaboration de l'auteur et du lecteur" (L'Ange, 44-45; see also 46).

[143] See Conyngham, 21-22, 125, 130. Note Ewald's description of how Alicia perceives God:

> elle a foi dans un Dieu d'une sublimité éclairée, entendue--elle peuple son paradis de martyrs qui n'exagèrent rien, d'élus honorables, de saints compassés, de vierges pratiques, de chérubins convenables. Elle croit à un ciel, mais à un ciel de dimensions rationnelles!--Son idéal serait un ciel *terre à terre*, enfin, car le soleil même lui paraît trop dans les nuages, "trop dans *le bleu*. (*L'Eve*, 86)

See also Villiers's comments on Tribulat Bonhomet's conception of God (*Tribulat Bonhomet*, 214), and compare the relativity expressed in Yeats's early poem, "The Indian Upon God" (*Poems*, 76-77).

[144] "Peintures décoratives," 152. See also Appendice to Vol. XI of *Oeuvres complètes*: "Ceux-là qui ne portent pas en eux l'âme de tout ce que le monde peut leur montrer auront beau le regarder: ils ne le reconnaîtront pas, toute chose n'étant belle que selon la pensée de celui qui la regarde et la réfléchit en lui-même" (*Oeuvres complètes*, XI, 274).

[145] Gilbert Durand, *L'Imagination symbolique*, Initiation Philosophique (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1964), 12.

[146] Conyngham notes that Hadaly's mystery comes in part from her multiplicity, which she associates with the versatility of the actress who can play all female roles. Hadaly does not wish to be limited to one particular role, Conyngham writes, because "elle préfère symboliser la Femme absolue. Elle perdrait son caractère tout particulier de signe [il vaut mieux dire "symbole"] si Lord Ewald voulait la limiter à une seule interprétation. Son sens symbolique est sa meilleure signification" (Conyngham, 147). Conyngham insists on the importance of mystery to Villiers's philosophy. When one meaning among several must be chosen, "On choisit donc le sens qui réduit le moins le mystère, la valeur suggestive et personnelle d'un phénomène ou d'un mot. Rien dans ce monde ne doit être le signifié. Tout doit se transformer en signifiant; l'univers devient par là une série de signes [symboles] qui mènent au moment le plus évocateur de l'Au-delà" (Conyngham, 51).

[147] See Suzanne K. Langer, *Feeling and Form: A Theory of Art* (New York: Scribner's, c1953), 31, 52, passim; and *Philosophy in a New Key*, passim.

148 See Feeling and Form, passim, especially Part II, Chapters 4 and 13, 45-68, 208-57.

149 See Owen Barfield, Poetic Diction: A Study in Meaning, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1952, c1964), 55.

150 Note Ewald's phrase, "Autre style, autres sentiments" (L'Eve, 65). He gives a vivid demonstration of what he means in the two divergent pictures of Alicia presented through her own words, and through Ewald's "traduction" of those words. See L'Eve, Book I, Chapters XIII, XIV.

151 "Peintures décoratives," 152. Villiers goes on to make the distinction between the Beautiful and the Pretty which is implicit in the discussion of Alicia given on pages 81-82 of L'Eve future: "Le Beau n'a rien à faire avec le Joli, qui n'élève pas, qui ne grandit pas. On peut enfler les lignes du Joli, on n'obtiendra pas de lui la plénitude" ("Peintures décoratives," 152).

NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

[1] In The Imagination of an Insurrection: Dublin, Easter 1916 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), William Irwin Thompson ascribes Yeats's "unbelievable greatness" to the conflict of opposites within himself and to the dialectic process by which he came to terms with the conflict:

> Few contemporary poets have been so deeply rooted in historical events, and those that have, have participated in actions that took them away from art. Yeats's amazing self-mastery (and, indeed, mastery of society) seems to have been the result of his dialectical method of experiencing the world. First he would immerse himself in action, and let it overwhelm him completely, then slowly he would reverse the process to have the Self completely envelop the Other and lift history up into the region of myth. Because he lived a myth, history became the myth in which he found himself. At first this dialectic was instinctive and unconscious, but in the introspection after the battles of 1913, Yeats attempted to articulate his own theory of personality. (Thompson, 151-52)

[2] Yeats tells us that Mrs. Yeats had read a fair amount of philosophy but that, despite her vital role in communicating the system, her reading had little influence on the development of A Vision. After he had read what he was able to obtain from the list his wife prepared of her own reading in philosophy, Yeats commented: "Although the more I read the better did I understand what I had been taught, I found neither the geometrical symbolism nor anything that could have inspired it except the vortex of Empedocles" (A Vision, 20). For a list of the works which influenced Yeats either directly or indirectly in writing A Vision (1925), see the Bibliography in A Critical Edition of Yeats's A Vision (1925), ed. George Mills Harper and Walter Kelly Hood, 87-92.

[3] On Yeats's readings in history and biography, see A Vision, 12.

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[4] Thompson writes of Yeats's choice of Heart over Soul:

> [Yeats] was not a dreamy Pre-Raphaelite, or a Buddhist or Christian saint; he was an artist concerned with the intellectual and imaginative transformation of material; he was a man of action, and the values of the warrior were most appropriate to his situation: nobility, strength, courage, and gentleness. He saw himself as Oisin, the man who journeyed out of time with the temptress, but returned to sing to a mob-ruled, priest-ridden world of the greatness of the people of Finn, the people of Burke, the people of Grattan, the people of Swift, of Berkeley, of Emmet, and of Parnell. At sixty-seven, Yeats could look back over all his poetry and say: "The swordsman throughout repudiates the saint, but not without vacillation. Is that perhaps the sole theme--Usheen and Patrick--...?" (Thompson, 151; Yeats quotation from Letters, 798)

[5] See Judges 14.

[6] A. Norman Jeffares, A Commentary on the Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats (London: Macmillan, 1968), 511.

[7] In their Notes to A Vision (1925), Harper and Hood give the alchemical meaning of "tincture" as found in the OED: "a supposed spiritual principle or immaterial substance whose character or quality may be infused into material things, which are then said to be tinctured; the quintessence, spirit, or soul of a thing" (quoted in Harper and Hood, Notes, 10).

[8] Compare the description of the souls in the crucible given in Fairy and Folk Tales (Fairy and Folk Tales, 287). See above, Chapter Two, 94-95 and Chapter Three, 250-52. Compare also a passage in Strindberg's To Damascus. The stranger is experiencing on the individual level a cyclic evolution much like that described by Robartes. He explains to the Lady that, "I feel as if I lay hacked in pieces and were being slowly melted in Medea's cauldron. Either I shall be sent to the soap-boilers, or arise renewed from my own dripping! It depends on Medea's skill!" (To Damascus, 36).

[9] Per Amica, 356-57.

[10] Piobb, II, 341.

[11] Per Amica, 354.

[12] Tribulat Bonhomet, 202.

[13] Piobb, II, 343; emphasis mine.

[14] Helen Hennessy Vendler, Yeats's Vision and the Later Plays (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, c1963), 75.

[15] See above Chapter One, 28-30.

[16] Piobb, II, 364; emphasis mine.

[17] Compare Per Amica, 354.

[18] See Autobiographies, 378; Plays, 777-78. Compare the inverse correspondence of life in Tír-na-n-Og and mortal life.

[19] See The Words upon the Window-Pane, in Plays, 944.

[20] The Thirteenth Cone, or Thirteenth Sphere as Yeats sometimes calls it, is numbered thirteen because in extending his system into ever-greater cycles or wheels, Yeats writes of a symbolical or ideal year divided into twelve cycles corresponding to months. The Thirteenth Cycle or Thirteenth Cone "may deliver us from the twelve cycles of time and space" (A Vision, 210). Within the phaseless sphere "live all souls that have been set free" of the Great Wheel of reincarnation (A Vision, 210). Yeats distinguishes between the phaseless sphere as seen by those who are in the condition of fire and by those who are still excluded from it, in the first case calling it, among other things, the Thirteenth Sphere, and in the second, the Thirteenth Cone or Cycle, or the Record. (See A Vision, 193, 210.) Because the distinguishing factor is perspective and not essence, and since Yeats seems inconsistent in his use of the terms, for convenience I use them interchangeably.

[21] Vendler, 80.

[22] See also Per Amica; for example, page 345. Yeats notes that these images in the Record "are in popular mysticism called 'the pictures in the astral light'" (A Vision, 193). In at least one instance (the notes to Michael Robartes and the Dancer, 1921), Yeats differentiates between Spiritus (or Anima) Mundi and "Record." The former is "a general store-house of images which have ceased to be a property of any personality or spirit" (Poems, 822); from Spiritus Mundi the images of our sleeping dreams are drawn. The "record" on the other hand, is "a kind of impersonal mirror . . . which takes much the same place in [Robartes'] system the lower strata of the astral light does among the disciples of Elephas Levi [sic]"; from the Record the images that come between sleeping and waking are drawn (Poems, 822). I use the term "record," as Yeats does in A Vision, as a synonym for the Anima Mundi or Great Memory.

[23] Vendler points out that "the period 'between lives' is not phasal, so the moon must be hidden" (Vendler, 190).

[24] See Plays, 777-78. Vendler remarks that Yeats's comments on the Meditation, whether by design or error, are particularly confusing. Among other inconsistencies, what I have treated as three separate stages in the Meditation are sometimes described by Yeats as three stages, sometimes as three different names for the same stage. See Vendler, 75-76.

[25] Diarmuid and Dervorgilla were first introduced in "The Vision of O'Sullivan the Red," the story that eventually became "Hanrahan's Vision" in Stories of Red Hanrahan.

[26] Vendler appeals to the earlier versions of Diarmuid and Dervorgilla's tale in the Hanrahan stories as authority for concluding that "the political overtones found in the play are incidental" and that the analogies with the contemporary Irish situation "are, if not irrelevant to the unraveling of the meaning of the play, at least not its central concern" (Vendler, 187). I feel she has underplayed the significance of the political side of the story. In the Hanrahan stories the lovers are condemned partly because of their crime against their country, but more because of their crime against perfect love: it was not the "beauty that is as lasting as the night and the stars" that they loved in each other, but merely the fleeting "blossom of the man and of the woman" (Stories of Red Hanrahan, 251). This aspect of their crime is not mentioned in The Dreaming of the Bones; Yeats is careful, however, to draw attention to their political crime by establishing parallels to it even before we know who they are. The

switch in emphasis is, I think, a significant one that indicates an increased interest on Yeats's part in issues of concern to a wider and more general public than he had been addressing in 1896 when he first published the Diarmuid and Dervorgilla story in "The Vision of O'Sullivan the Red."

[27] Vendler criticizes The Dreaming of the Bones because "there is no necessary connection between the lovers and the young man" (Vendler, 194). As will be obvious from my discussion, I disagree with her.

[28] Ibid., 190.

[29] See A Vision, 237-40.

[30] Since there is no direct evidence Yeats knew Villiers's novel L'Eve future, it may be simply a coincidence, but a rather interesting one, that the names of the spirit mediums in The Words upon the Window-Pane and in Villiers's novel are so similar: Mrs. Henderson and Mrs. Anderson. It is possible, however, that Arthur Symons may have acquainted Yeats with Villiers's novel and highly probable that Yeats at least knew of it, for Symons refers to it in his articles on Villiers in The Woman's World, The Illustrated London News, and The Symbolist Movement in Literature.

[31] Vendler remarks on the vampire-like quality of these Spirits and their similarity to the Leanhaun Shee. See Vendler, 80.

[32] In the Hanrahan story, Yeats gives Dervorgilla, at least, a very different form, but one nonetheless appropriate to her sin. Because the Diarmuid and Dervorgilla Hanrahan meets loved only "the blossom of the man and of the woman" in each other, after death Diarmuid sees Dervorgilla "always as a body that has been a long time in the ground" (Stories of Red Hanrahan, 251).

[33] See A Vision, 235.

[34] There is also a third play in which the intercession of the living for the dead plays an important role: The Only Jealousy of Emer and its prose revision, Fighting the Waves. In this case the intercession is successful: Emer sacrifices Cuchulain's love and consequently he is returned from the dead.

[35] Vendler, 200.

[36] Compare the inverse correspondence between life in Tír-na-n-Og and on earth.

[37] *Per Amica*, 356. This is the union described in the first of the "Supernatural Songs": "Ribh at the Tomb of Baile and Aillinn." See *Poems*, 555.

[38] *Per Amica*, 356; emphasis mine.

[39] Cirlot, 6.

[40] Vendler remarks that "the *Purification* . . . is familiar to us from 'Byzantium,' in which the soul breaks 'bitter furies of complexity'" (Vendler, 84).

[41] *Per Amica*, 355.

[42] *Autobiographies*, 457. In her study of *A Vision*, Vendler regards artistic creation as the "single theme" that Yeats claims for his system (*A Vision*, 5). In the first half of her work, she studies *A Vision* in detail from this perspective. Although it covers much of the same ground as Vendler's Chapter III, my study of the process of reincarnation as an image of artistic creation owes little to her work. I concur with Vendler that, to alter Yeats's phrase, *A Vision* gives metaphors of poetry, but I do not agree that it stops at that.

[43] In a letter written on October 4, 1930 to T. Sturge Moore, Yeats informs his friend that "Byzantium" "originates from a criticism of yours. You objected to the last verse of *Sailing to Byzantium* because a bird made by a goldsmith was just as natural as anything else. That showed me that the idea needed exposition" (Bridge, 164). Moore's letter, written April 16, 1930, is on page 162 of *W.B. Yeats and T. Sturge Moore: Their Correspondence*.

[44] In his note to "The Gift of Harun Al-Rashid" published in *The Dial*, June 1924 and in *The Cat and the Moon and Certain Poems* (1924), Yeats quotes Heraclitus: "Mortals are Immortals and Immortals are Mortals, living the others' death and dying the others' life" (*Poems*, 829). Kathleen Raine devotes a monograph to the topic of reincarnation in Yeats's work: "Death-in-Life and Life-in-Death: 'Cuchulain Comforted' and 'News for the Delphic Oracle'."

[45] Ellis and Yeats, Blake, I, 254, quoted in F.A.C. Wilson, W.B. Yeats and Tradition, (n.p.: Victor Gollancz, 1958; rpt. University Paperbacks, London: Methuen, 1968), 241-42.

[46] Vendler, 77.

[47] Autobiographies, 332.

[48] See Per Amica, 356.

[49] On the image of the dancer, see especially Frank Kermode Romantic Image (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, c1957; rpt. New York: Vintage/Random House, n.d.), Chapter IV, 49-91.

[50] Luke 22:43.

[51] W.B. Yeats, Letters on Poetry from W.B. Yeats to Dorothy Wellesley (London: Oxford University Press, 1940; rpt. Oxford Paperbacks, 1964), 8.

[52] See The Herne's Egg, in Plays, 1029-30; "Leda and the Swan" and "The Mother of God," in Poems, 441, 499.

[53] Vendler, 85.

[54] Bridge, 162.

[55] Wilson, Tradition, 238.

[56] Compare the braying of the Old Beggar in The Player Queen; see, for example, Plays, 727-28.

[57] Vendler, 159.

[58] See Per Amica, 340, 361.

[59] Wilson, Tradition, 110.

[60] See A Vision, 239-40. Direct union with the god in his own form would result in Attracta's being consumed by his fire, as

Semele had the misfortune to learn (see Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book III).

[61] See *Per Amica*, 340, 361.

[62] Vendler, 87.

[63] Wilson, *Tradition*, 238.

[64] "The *Thirteenth Cone* or cycle . . . is in every man and called by every man his freedom" (*A Vision*, 302).

[65] *Per Amica*, 357.

[66] See *A Vision*, 214. In their Notes to *A Critical Edition of Yeats's* A Vision *(1925)*, Harper and Hood remark that Yeats's automatic script

> contains numerous discussions of Unity of Being, "a co-equality of Primary & Antithetical" (7 Oct 1921). Earlier Yeats had asked, "What is unity of being?" The control replied: "Complete harmony between physical body, intellect, & spiritual desire - *all may be imperfect* but if harmony is perfect it is unity". It "cannot exist before 15 or after 19" (3 Sept 1918). (Harper and Hood, Notes, 12)

[67] W.B. Yeats, "A General Introduction for my Work," in *Essays and Introductions*, 518; see also *A Vision*, 82.

[68] As Yeats reports, "the tradition is founded which declares even to our own day that Christ alone was exactly six feet high, perfect physical man" (*A Vision*, 273). In the card file used by Yeats to record and codify the experiments in automatic writing that were a source of *A Vision* there is a card entitled "'Initiate' ('the Perfect Man'); Christ is the subject. See Harper and Hood, xxv.

[69] The Syrian's view is implied in the revised version of the play but stated explicitly, albeit in interrogative fashion, in the Adelphi text. See *Plays*, 926.

[70] See also *A Vision*, 68-69.

[71] On Yeats's confusing use of "Daimon" to mean different things at different times, see Harper and Hood, Notes, 67-68 and Moore, The Unicorn, 287-8, 368.

[72] Autobiographies, 272.

[73] In A Commentary on The Words upon the Window-Pane (Plays, 975) Yeats also associates the Daimon with dramatic power.

[74] Per Amica, 332.

[75] Ibid., 362.

[76] See above, Chapter Two, 183 and Chapter Three, 252-53.

[77] Per Amica, 346.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Ibid., 336.

[80] Ibid.

[81] Ibid.

[82] Ibid., 332.

[83] Compare the role of illusion and image in L'Eve future.

[84] Autobiographies, 274n.

[85] See A Vision, 136.

[86] Autobiographies, 273.

[87] See also A Vision, 136.

[88] We should remember that in L'Eve future, although Hadaly, who is herself a particular incarnation of a universal (divine

beauty), is capable of abstract thought, she expresses her thoughts only through images.

[89] See *Axël*, 192-93.

[90] *Per Amica*, 357, 363.

[91] Shirley C. Swartz points out that both Yeats and Arthur Symons use the dancer and the dance as images of Unity of Being, and that "Yeats equates the dance with the Great Wheel itself" ("The Imperial Self in Modern Autobiography: Stein, Lewis and Yeats," Diss. University of Alberta 1976, 246). She refers to the passage in *A Vision* where Yeats writes of having "described the Great Wheel as danced on the desert sands by mysterious dancers who left the traces of their feet to puzzle the Caliph of Bagdad and his learned men" (*A Vision*, 80-81). See also *A Vision* (1925), 9-10.

[92] *Per Amica*, 347.

[93] See "Ego Dominus Tuus," *Poems*, 367. The poem is also found in *Per Amica*, 321-24.

[94] Ille is not the only character of Yeats to trace images in the sand: Kusta ben Luka's wife in "The Gift of Harun Al-Rashid" (*Poems*, 468) and the "Judwalis or Diagrammatists" of *A Vision* (*A Vision*, 41, and *A Vision*, 1925, 10) make marks in the sands. The sands of time are also important in such early poems and stories as "Dhoya," "The Wanderings of Oisin," "The Song of the Happy Shepherd," "The Sad Shepherd."

The image of drawing in sand brings up interesting parallels with Strindberg's play, *The Road to Damascus*. "Ego Dominus Tuus" appears in *Per Amica Silentia Lunae*. In the epilogue to this work, Yeats notes that in Paris he met "from time to time, with the German poet Dauthendey, a grave Swede whom I only discovered after years to have been Strindberg, then looking for the philosophers' stone in a lodging near the Luxembourg" (*Per Amica*, 367). One of the expressions of Strindberg's search was *To Damascus*. In this play, the hero, the Stranger, writes constantly in the sand. He explains at one point that what he is writing is "Eve 1864" (*To Damascus*, 33). Eve is the name the Stranger has given to the fateful lady and in 1864 a disaster is to happen to the Lady and the Stranger (*To Damascus*, 34). The Stranger, like Ille, "By the help of an image" in the sand calls to his opposite. Ille's words about his search for his anti-self could be applied to the Stranger (see

Poems, 371, 11.70-79). In "Ego Dominus Tuus" Ille points out that the great artists were not satisfied with a single, calm approach to life, but constantly sought their opposites; they were involved, like Keats, "His senses and his heart unsatisfied," in a perpetually unfulfilled quest. In To Damascus, Strindberg presents an interesting image to illustrate the multiplicity necessary to any great thought or work of art. The monastery in Part III contains a portrait gallery in which the great artists and thinkers of the world are depicted as having two or more heads. Each has "the two halves that [make] a whole--a whole man" (To Damascus, 282). This is what Ille seeks.

Mary Catherine Flannery draws attention to the images Ille traces in the sand. She links his activity to that of the Judwalis whose "children are taught dances which leave upon the sand traces full of symbolical meaning" (A Vision, 41). Both Ille and the Judwalis are, according to Flannery, trying "to penetrate reality" with their diagrams (Mary Catherine Flannery, 137). She believes it is significant that Yeats uses the word "trace," for by it "he seems to indicate that the patterns of reality which . . . Ille and the Judwalis seek, are present and must be discovered by ritualistic activity." We should recall that alchemical gold is always present in the base metal and need only be discovered by similarly ritualistic activity.

[95] See Per Amica, 346.

[96] Stéphane Mallarmé, "Ballets," in Oeuvres complètes, 306.

[97] Pater, Renaissance, 132; quoted in part in Kermode, 65.

[98] Mallarmé, "Ballets," 304.

[99] For the sake of convenience, I refer to this character as Salome, although this is just one of several traditional names given to the dancing daughter of Herodias who was nameless in the Bible (see Matt. 14:6; Mark 6:22). At various times she has also been known, for example, as Herodiana (see W.B. Crow, A History of Magic, Witchcraft and Occultism [London: The Aquarian Press, 1968], 228), and Boziya (Gaer, 161). Mallarmé explains in the Préface to his Noces d'Hérodiade that he has chosen

> le nom d'Hérodiade pour la différencier de la Salomé je dirai moderne ou exhumée avec son fait-divers archaïque--la danse, etc., l'isoler comme l'ont fait des tableaux solitaires dans le fait

> même mystérieux--et faire miroiter ce qui probablement hanta, en apparue avec son attribut--le chef du saint--dût la demoiselle constituer un monstre aux amants vulgaires de la vie.

(Les Noces d'Hérodiade, ed. Gardner Davies [Paris: Gallimard, c1959], 51.) Mallarmé has the Salome figure in mind, although there is perhaps something of her mother in her also. A blending of their characters is not unusual: Wilde, for instance, attributes to Salome the passion for John which is associated in legend with Herodias.

[100] Richard Ellmann, "Overtures to Wilde's Salome," Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature, 17 (1968), 17.

[101] In his Commentary on The King of the Great Clock Tower, Yeats refers specifically to Heine and Wilde.

[102] Per Amica, 361.

[103] Ibid., 361, 357; see also 346.

[104] Ibid., 346.

[105] Mallarmé's term "in-individuel," used to describe the dancer, is particularly appropriate for Yeats's Queen ("Ballets," 304).

[106] "For a reason that I cannot guess," the Queen tells the Stroller, "I would not harm you" (Plays, 982).

[107] Vendler, 153.

[108] See also The King of the Great Clock Tower, 1934, in Plays, 1006. Vendler points out that "The necessity of that desecration in the lover's night . . . is the theme of so many of the later poems" (Vendler, 153). She draws attention especially to "Crazy Jane Talks with the Bishop."

[109] Although Yeats does not state in the stage directions that the Queen's face remains hidden from the audience throughout the rest of the play, there are no indications to the contrary.

[110] It is actually the First Attendant who explains the meaning of the vision and thus of the play with the refrain that expresses

the theme. Significantly, the First Attendant is an elderly woman. (See Plays, 978, 979.)

[111] Per Amica, 356.

[112] Most of the nineteenth-century treatments of the Salome motif include images "de l'union charnelle, destinée à évoquer la fusion mystérieuse du créateur et de son inspiration" (Gardner Davies, Introduction to Mallarmé's Les Noces, 17). Heine's "Atta Troll," Wilde's Salomé, and the fragments of Mallarmé's "Hérodiade" which Davies edits in Les Noces d'Hérodiade all contain scenes in which the Salome figure kisses the severed head of the poet-prophet, thus symbolizing, in Davies words, the "mariage de la beauté parfaite et du pur génie" (Davies, 28).

[113] See Axël, 192; A Vision, 136; Per Amica, 357.

[114] In a note to "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen" Yeats explains that the horsemen are faeries: apparitions seen at times by the country people who call them "now 'fallen angels' now 'ancient inhabitants of the country'" (Poems, 433n).

[115] Autobiographies, 355.

[116] Ibid., 191.

[117] Ibid., 269, 190.

[118] James W. Flannery, 61-62; quoting Yeats, Autobiographies, 194-95. Chapter Three of Flannery's book is devoted to the topic "Creating a Unity Through Ireland and an Irish National Theatre," 58-100.

[119] W.B. Yeats, Pages from a Diary Written in Nineteen Hundred and Thirty, in Explorations, 290.

[120] Note that Yeats chooses a twilight time between two ages which would allow him to participate in two worlds at once. Among the other civilizations possessing Unity of Culture, Yeats includes mid-fifteenth-century Europe, Castiglione's Urbino, and ancient Greece. See James W. Flannery, 62.

[121] On Yeats's ambivalent attitude to the eighteenth century and its great Irish figures, particularly Swift, see Douglas N. Archibald, "*The Words upon the Window-pane* and Yeats's Encounter with Jonathan Swift," in *Yeats and the Theatre*, ed. Robert O'Driscoll and Lorna Reynolds, Yeats Studies ([Toronto]: Macmillan, c1975), 176-214.

[122] Jeffares, *Commentary*, 326.

[123] Swartz, 222.

[124] James W. Flannery, 65.

[125] Wilson, *Tradition*, 137.

[126] On the Easter Rising and its relationship to Irish imagination, see Thompson; Chapter Five is devoted to Yeats.

[127] Thompson speaks of the "supreme double consciousness" of "Easter 1916" (Thompson, 148). "Easter 1916," first published in *Easter, 1916* (1916) is, according to Jeffares, dated September 25, 1916 (Jeffares, *Commentary*, 224). "The Rose Tree," although it did not appear until November 1920 (in *The Dial*) is dated April 7, 1917 (Jeffares, *Commentary*, 230).

[128] Thompson, 147.

[129] Ibid., 155.

[130] In 1916 Easter was actually on April 23. The "sacrificial act" commenced on April 24 (Thompson, 97).

[131] *The Dreaming of the Bones*, set at the time of the 1916 insurrection, is dated 1919 and copyrighted 1918 (*Plays*, 762).

[132] Thompson, 161.

[133] Ibid., 162.

[134] Harper and Hood comment that the words terror and joy "were particularly associated with [*A Vision*, 1925], suggesting the feeling appropriate for a new influx" (Notes, 7). They refer the

reader to A Vision (1925), xxii; "To-morrow's Revolution," in On the Boiler (Dublin: The Cuala Press, [1939], rpt. in Explorations, 425; Letters, 901; Modern Poetry, Broadcast National Lectures, 18 (Oct. 11, 1936), (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1936), rpt. in Essays and Introductions, 501; and "Easter 1916," in Poems, 391-94.

[135] See Introduction to A Vision (1925), xv-xxiii.

[136] "The Tables of the Law," 307.

[137] Mary Catherine Flannery notes that a manuscript draft of this poem dates it from 1912 (Mary Catherine Flannery, 128). It was not published, however, until it came out in Poetry, October, 1917. It next appeared in The Wild Swans at Coole, 1917, and the New Statesman (17 November, 1917) before being published in Per Amica Silentia Lunae in 1918.

[138] Hic's seemingly narcissistic pursuit of himself seems a little odd for primary man, since, as we have seen, in A Vision it is the antithetical person who is absorbed with self. Michael J. Sidnell points out, however, that "Ego Dominus Tuus" is the "germinal poem" of the cycle of eight poems which are the "opening movement of the new set" of works revolving around Michael Robartes. The poem is, as a result, "groping" and "more tentative than those that followed" (Sidnell, "Mr. Yeats, Michael Robartes," 226, 240, 227n). Sidnell examines the eight poems of the "opening movement" in his article. (See especially 226-40.) Mary Catherine Flannery reprints the 1912 draft of "Ego Dominus Tuus" and notes some of the differences between it and the final version. She points out that many of Ille's speeches in the final version belong to Hic in the early draft and concludes that these characters are not contradictory, but complementary, representing "interchangeable parts of Yeats's own personality" (Mary Catherine Flannery, 129-38).

[139] Harper and Hood, Ed. Intro., xxviii.

[140] Sidnell, "Mr. Yeats, Michael Robartes," 226.

[141] Ibid., 229.

[142] The note continued to appear in this form until 1933 when the reference to John Aherne was removed from The Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats (1933) and subsequent volumes. (See Poems, 821.) Sid-

nell calls attention to a 1922 letter to Allan Wade in which Yeats explains about Michael Robartes:

> I have brought him back to life. My new story is that he is very indignant because I used his real name in describing a number of fictitious adventures, and that because I called my fictitious hero by his name, many people have supposed him to be dead. He lived for years in Mesopotamia, but when the war came there returned to England for a short time. In England he got into communication with a certain John Aherne, and through him got into correspondence with me, and finally conveyed to me, without quite forgiving me, the task of editing and publishing the philosophy which he has discovered among certain Arabian tribes. That philosophy now fills a very large tin box upon which my eyes at this moment are fixed. I am giving it to the world in fragments, poems, notes, and a Cuala volume.

(Letters, 676-77; quoted in Sidnell, "Mr. Yeats, Michael Robartes," 228-29.)

[143] In the very early stages of A Vision it was first John Aherne and then Owen who participated in the dialogue with Michael Robartes. (See Harper and Hood, Ed. Intro., xxviii.) Sidnell suggests that John "may have been a fused recollection of Owen Aherne (founded on Lionel Johnson) and John Hearne, the father of the protagonist in The Speckled Bird" (Sidnell, "Mr. Yeats, Michael Robartes," 229n).

[144] "The Adoration of the Magi," 309.

[145] Harper and Hood, Notes, 8.

[146] Sidnell, "Mr. Yeats, Michael Robartes," 238.

[147] Sidnell would add a third instance of Robartes' being cast as poet. He suggests that Yeats is alluding to Robartes when, in "A People's Theatre," he refers to "a certain friend" who has written "The Phases of the Moon" and "The Double Vision" (Sidnell, "Mr. Yeats, Michael Robartes, 233n; see Explorations, 259). Yeats does not indicate who is the author of Robartes' book, referred to in "Ego Dominus Tuus." The book may have been written by Robartes himself or it may be a precursor to Speculum Angelorum et Hominum,

which Sidnell notes had not yet been invented when Yeats wrote "Ego Dominus Tuus." See Sidnell, "Mr. Yeats, Michael Robartes," 233.

[148] A Vision (1925), xx.

[149] Ibid., xxi, xx.

[150] Sidnell, "Mr. Yeats, Michael Robartes," 246.

[151] Ibid., 246-47.

[152] Yeats shared Robartes' views on women who think. See, for example, "A Prayer for my Daughter," Poems, 403-06.

[153] See A Vision, 53.

[154] See Plays, 566-67, 777-79, 789-91.

[155] This poem, dated 1923, first appeared as "The Gift of Haroun El Rashid" in English Life and the Illustrated Review in January 1924. The Dial published it in June 1924, when it was accompanied by a lengthy prose note quoting a "passage in a letter of Owen Aherne's" which Yeats said he would be including in A Vision (Poems, 828-29). It did not, however, appear there. The "letter" gives the "bare narrative" on which the poem was purported to have been founded. Although published earlier, this note seems to have been written later than the Introduction to the 1925 edition of A Vision. Compare the following passages, the first from A Vision, the second from the note to "The Gift of Harun Al-Rashid":

> The Judwali had once possessed a learned book called "The Way of the Soul between the Sun and the Moon" and attributed to a certain Kusta ben Luka, Christian Philosopher at the Court of Harun Al-Raschid, and though this, and a smaller book describing the personal life of the philosopher, had been lost or destroyed in desert fighting some generations before his [an old Judwali man's] time, its doctrines were remembered, for they had always constituted the beliefs of the Judwalis who look upon Kusta ben Luka as their founder. (A Vision, 1925, xix)

* * * * * * * * *

> All these contradictory stories seem to be a confused recollection of the contents of a little old book, lost many years ago with Kusta-ben-Luka's larger book in the desert battle which I have already described.

(Poems, 829; emphasis mine.) "The Gift of Haroun El Rashid" was included in the 1925 version of A Vision in the section entitled "What the Caliph Refused to Learn." It is re-titled "Desert Geometry or the Gift of Harun Al-Raschid."

[156] Sidnell, "Mr. Yeats, Michael Robartes," 249.

[157] Ibid.

[158] Ibid., 250.

[159] A Vision (1925), xv.

[160] Recall that "subjectivity--in Empedocles 'Discord' as I think--tends to separate man from man" (A Vision, 72).

[161] A Vision (1925), xvi, xx.

[162] Ibid., xvii.

[163] Ibid.

[164] Ibid.

[165] Ibid., xviii-xix.

[166] Sidnell, "Mr. Yeats, Michael Robartes," 247.

[167] W.B. Yeats, unpublished manuscript; quoted in Ellmann, Identity, 321-22.

[168] A Vision (1925), xxi-xxii.

[169] Ibid., xxi.

[170] Ibid., xxii.

[171] Unpublished manuscript; quoted in Ellmann, *Identity*, 323.

[172] *A Vision* (1925), 235-36, 237-38, 245-46, 246-47.

[173] Compare *A Vision* (1925), 237-38 and *A Vision* (1962), 12-13, 16; *A Vision* (1925), 245-46 and *A Vision* (1962), 14-15.

[174] *A Vision* (1925), xxiii.

[175] "The Dance of the Four Royal Persons" may be the source of a solitary and rather strange association of Aherne with dancers, women, and love. In *The Tower*, published in 1928, there is a poem entitled "Owen Ahern [sic] and his Dancers" (the spelling was changed to Aherne in 1933). This one poem had originally appeared in *The Cat and the Moon* in 1924 as two: "The Lover Speaks" and "The Heart Replies." The only mention of Aherne is in the title, which is difficult to relate to the poem. The clue may, however, lie in "The Dance of the Four Royal Persons." Since the account was "written" by Aherne, the Four Royal Persons, who present themselves as "the King, the Queen, the Prince and the Princess of the Country of Wisdom," (*A Vision*, 1925, 9), might be considered to be Aherne's dancers. They are perhaps linked to the poem because the Heart of the fifty-year-old Lover shows wisdom in making him "turn away and run from that young child" and in urging him to "let her choose a young man now and all for his wild sake" (*Poems*, 450).

[176] W.B. Yeats, *Stories of Michael Robartes and his Friends* (Dublin: The Cuala Press, [1932]). Although the date on the title page is 1931, the colophon indicates that the volume was finished in 1931, but published in 1932. Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations from the *Stories* are taken from *A Vision*, 1962.

[177] Sidnell, "Mr. Yeats, Michael Robartes," 254.

[178] Ibid., 252.

[179] Huddon, Duddon, and Daniel O'Leary are also found in a poem which was first published in 1932 in *Words for Music Perhaps and Other Poems*: "Tom the Lunatic" (see *Poems*, 528-29). In "Michael Robartes:- Two Occult Manuscripts," in *Yeats and the Occult*, ed. George Mills Harper, Walter Kelly Hood notes that the names Huddon,

Duddon, and Daniel O'Leary are taken from "Donald and His Neighbours," a tale from *Hibernian Tales* which Yeats included in *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry* (see Hood, "Michael Robartes," 216n). The names in "Donald and His Neighbours" are actually "Hudden and Dudden and Donald O'Nery" (see *Fairy and Folk Tales*, 270).

[180] *Stories of Michael Robartes and his Friends* (1932), 11. The "doggerel of Blake's" is actually two poems: "Long John Brown and Little Mary Bell" and "William Bond," *Blake Complete Writings*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 434, 434-36. In the Ellis/Yeats edition of Blake they are found on 81 and 79 respectively of Vol. III.

[181] W.B. Yeats, "Michael Robartes Foretells," unpublished typescript, printed in Hazard Adams, *Blake and Yeats: The Contrary Vision*, Cornell Studies in English (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1955), Appendix B, 301-05. Hood prints his reading of "Michael Robartes Foretells" together with another discarded work, "Appendix by Michael Robartes," in "Michael Robartes: Two Occult Manuscripts."

Hood dates "Michael Robartes Foretells" after Lady Gregory's death in 1932, and decides on 1936 as the most likely date (see Hood, "Michael Robartes," 216). The "Appendix by Michael Robartes" is a much earlier and more incomplete work, which Hood says is impossible to date exactly; he concludes, however, that it was probably written between 1918 and 1921 (see Hood, "Michael Robartes," 205-06). The Appendix, intended to clarify a conversation between Robartes and Aherne, was probably meant to accompany *A Vision* in its early form as a dialogue between these men. Hood describes it as "a strange appendix which presents the central materials of *A Vision*--the meaning of primary and antithetical, the nature of its cycles, and the like"; it also "wanders from its initial intentions; starting as a commentary on five diagrams, it comments on only one and then roves away from the one, making a return to the topic difficult or impossible" (Hood, "Michael Robartes," 206). The Appendix has an obvious aesthetic focus, but it is confusing and suggests that Yeats has not yet mastered his material (see Hood, "Michael Robartes," 207-08).

[182] This is also the image of Huddon, Duddon, and O'Leary presented in "Tom the Lunatic" (see *Poems*, 529).

[183] *The Secret Rose*, 1897, vii.

[184] The image of burning out also appears in "Tom the Lunatic."

[185] See Parks, Chapter VI (130-45) for further treatment of the Stories as mockery of former ideals, particularly in relation to Villiers.

[186] See A Vision, 54.

[187] See ibid., 36.

[188] Sidnell, "Mr. Yeats, Michael Robartes," 253.

[189] Although, as we have seen, Yeats has consciously taken the name "Mary Bell" from a poem by Blake, there is perhaps an unconscious echo of an earlier character of his own: Mary Lavell, the sweetheart of the Hanrahan stories and the O'Sullivan Rua poems. There are links also with other Marys in his own works: Mary Carton is John Sherman's beloved, Crazy Jane was originally Cracked Mary, and of course, the Virgin Mary plays an important role in Yeats's work.

[190] Both Mary and John Bond were "Brought up in the strictest principles of the Church of Ireland," and were horror-stricken when they fell in love at first sight (A Vision, 44).

[191] Sidnell, "Mr. Yeats, Michael Robartes," 254.

[192] Ibid., 252-53.

[193] See A Vision, 50-51.

[194] Compare the relationship between Ewald and Alicia, who, although not a dancer, is an "artiste."

[195] Yeats must have felt this passage to be particularly important, for he quotes from it in On the Boiler when predicting--indeed desiring--the coming of the next great war that will, he hopes, end the crisis that modern civilization has reached. See "To-morrow's Revolution," 425-26.

[196] "Michael Robartes Foretells," Adams, 301; Hood, 219.

[197] Yeats seems to have been uneasy with making predictions: "Michael Robartes Foretells" remained unpublished and its parallel

in the 1925 edition of A Vision was removed when the book was revised (compare A Vision, 1925, 210-15 and A Vision, 1962, 300; see also the note to A Vision, 1925, 214, in Harper and Hood's Notes, 66. The predictions of war, mechanism, automatism, and decadence culminating in the arrival of the new era "bringing its stream of irrational force" (A Vision, 1925, 213) are replaced in the revised edition with the avowal, in "The End of the Cycle," that, try as he may, Yeats is unable to see the future. He knows the new age will be subjective, but the details of "the countermovement, the antithetical multiform influx" are hidden from him:

> Then I understand. I have already said all that can be said. The particulars are the work of the Thirteenth Cone or cycle which is in every man and called by every man his freedom. Doubtless, for it can do all things and knows all things, it knows what it will do with its own freedom but it has kept the secret. (A Vision, 302)

[198] "Michael Robartes Foretells," Adams, 301; Hood, 219.

[199] Ibid., Adams, 301-02; Hood, 219. Hood's reading of the typescript is slightly different here from Adams': Hood prints, "the State as moulded by History" (emphasis mine).

[200] Ibid., Adams, 302; Hood, 220.

[201] Ibid.

[202] Ibid.

[203] Ibid., Adams, 304; Hood, 222.

[204] Ibid., Adams, 305; Hood, 224.

[205] Both chronologically and as far as content is concerned, "Owen Aherne and his Dancers" (1928) stands in isolation.

[206] Thompson, 165-66.

[207] Ibid., 165.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

[1] Ian F.A. Bell, "The Phantasmagoria of Hugh Selwyn Mauberley," Paideuma, 5, No. 3 (Winter, 1976), 374. "The Magic Lantern" is found in The Pathos of Distance (New York: Scribner's, 1913), 3-15. Bell notes that although he has been "unable to find any reference to it in de Gourmont's published works," Huneker "claims that Villiers had also told the story to Rémy de Gourmont" (Bell, 374n). De Gourmont's version of the tale, entitled "Le Mirage," appears in "Notes sur Villiers de l'Isle-Adam," Mercure de France (août, 1890), 261-62, and is reprinted in the appendix to Vol. XI of Villiers's Oeuvres complètes, 276. Huneker's essay contains a fully detailed narrative in Villiers's voice. De Gourmont's version is a single paragraph which he describes as "le strict squelette" of the story told to him "en quelques traits" one day in the spring of 1889 when Villiers was "déjà malade et sur sa fin" (de Gourmont, "Notes," 261).

[2] Bell, 374.

[3] See Huneker, 8, 9, 13. Rémy de Gourmont's outline of Villiers's tale mentions only "le mécanisme des mirages" (Appendice, Oeuvres complètes, XI, 276).

[4] Bell, 374.

[5] Because of its inclusion in a work that was unpublished at the time, Pound may not have been familiar with Yeats's use of the term phantasmagoria in his private Journal entry for December 13, 1908 (see Memoirs, 138). One of the other instances in which Yeats uses the word prior to 1920 is, however, particularly important in connection with Pound. In his article on "Swedenborg, Mediums, and the Desolate Places," published in 1914, Yeats uses the word "phantasmagoria" twice and writes at length of related ideas. In the same article he comments: "Last winter Mr. Ezra Pound was editing the late Professor Fenollosa's translations of the Noh Drama of Japan, and read me a great deal of what he was doing" ("Swedenborg," 64-65). "Last winter" was the winter of 1913 when Pound and Yeats were living together at Stone Cottage, Coleman's Hatch (see Joseph Hone, W.B. Yeats 1865-1939, 2nd ed. [London:

Macmillan, 1962], 272). In *'Noh' or Accomplishment, a Study of the Classical Stage of Japan*, Pound mentions Yeats a number of times. Yeats himself wrote an Introduction to *Certain Noble Plays of Japan: from the Manuscripts of Ernest Fenollosa, chosen and finished by Ezra Pound* (Dundrum: The Cuala Press, 1916; Intro. republished in the reprint of *'Noh' or Accomplishment: The Classic Noh Theatre of Japan*, by Ezra Pound and Ernest Fenollosa [New York: New Directions, c1959], 151-63). By his own admission, the Noh was an important influence on Yeats's drama. He saw strong parallels between the supernatural portrayed in the Noh, Irish folk beliefs, and occult thought. In *A Vision*, Yeats illustrates his description of the Phantasmagoria stage of the Meditation with a story from a Noh play (see *A Vision*, 231 and above, Chapter Four, 293-94.

[6] "A General Introduction," 509.

[7] Bell, 362.

[8] On phantasmagoria in Yeats's work, see, for example, J. Middleton Murry, "Mr. Yeats's Swan Song," *Athenaeum*, 4640 (April 4, 1919), rpt. in *Aspects of Literature*, rev. ed. (Jonathan Cape, c1934), rpt. Hall and Steinman, 9-13; Vendler, 78-80; Ellmann, *Identity*, 62-63; Harold Bloom, *Yeats* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 178-89; Gould, passim; Kathleen Raine, "Hades Wrapped in Cloud," in *Yeats and the Occult*, ed. George Mills Harper, 98-101; Sidnell, "Mr. Yeats, Michael Robartes," passim.

[9] See Olive Cook, *Movement in Two Dimensions: A Study of the Animated and Projected Pictures which Preceded the Invention of Cinematography* (London: Hutchinson, 1963), 12-13.

[10] Ibid., 13.

[11] Ibid., 18.

[12] Cook, 18-19. Compare Kircher's screen with the veil and mask which serve both to conceal and to reveal the unknown.

[13] The magic lantern technology included "an apparatus known as a 'Metamorphoser'" which was used to facilitate the smooth changing of slides (Cook, 95).

[14] See Cook, 19.

[15] "Phantasmagoria," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed., 1911.

[16] See ibid.; Cook, 20; Bell, 362.

[17] Cook, 20.

[18] "Lantern," Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. XVI, 11th ed., 1911, 187.

[19] Cook, 101.

[20] Ibid., 103.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Bell, 362.

[23] "Phantasmagoria," Encyclopaedia Britannica.

[24] Bell, 363. Aside from Pound and Villiers, among the authors that Bell cites for their references to phantasmagoria or to the magic lantern are T.S. Eliot, Fenimore Cooper, Charles Dickens, Thomas Hardy, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Gustave Flaubert, Edgar Allan Poe, Henry James, and Stéphane Mallarmé. Ellmann mentions Rimbaud and Baudelaire (Identity, 62). To this list I would add not only Yeats, but also Maurice Beaubourg (L'Image, 14) and Goethe. That Goethe intended the conjuring of Paris and Helena in Faust, Part II, Act I, as an instance of phantasmagoria is established by the title of the second sketch for the announcement of the Helena, published in 1826: "Helena. Classical-Romantic Phantasmagoria. Interlude to Faust." (See Faust, ed. Hamlin, 399.) I am indebted to Bente Roed Cochran for drawing this sketch to my attention.

[25] Bell, 366.

[26] Ibid., 368-69, 375.

[27] Ibid., 374.

[28] Ibid., 364.

[29] Walter Pater, Marius the Epicurean His Sensations and Ideas, 1885, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: New American Library, c1970), 94-95; emphasis mine. Marius the Epicurean was, according to Yeats,

"our only contemporary classic" (Memoirs, 36) and "the only great prose in modern English" (Autobiographies, 302). In the first draft of his autobiography, Yeats specifically mentions the "Animula Vagula" chapter three times (see Memoirs, 36, 42, 95).

[30] Eliphas Lévi, La Clef, 244, 246.

[31] Schuré, 332.

[32] Regardie, I, 203.

[33] "Rosa Alchemica," 284.

[34] Tribulat Bonhomet, 149.

[35] Ibid., 198. On the camera obscura, peepshow, and panorama see Cook, 23-46.

[36] Tribulat Bonhomet, 30.

[37] "Duke of Portland," in Contes cruels, in Oeuvres complètes, II, 103.

[38] Ibid., 104.

[39] Ibid., 105.

[40] Ibid., 106.

[41] Ibid., 109.

[42] "Le Tzar et les Grands-Ducs," 201-02. It is significant that Wagner's opera uses phantasmagoric projection in its opening and closing scenes. In the first scene, set inside the Venusberg, the Three Graces perform a dance "interpretive of the stories of Europa and the White Bull and Leda and the Swan as these scenes loom up in the background" (Milton Cross, Complete Stories of the Great Operas [New York: Doubleday, c1955]; rev. and abridged as Stories of the Great Operas [New York: Washington Square Press, 1961], 360). In the final scene, shortly after Wolfram sings his song to the Evening Star, Tannhäuser calls out in despair to Venus. Milton Cross describes what happens: "A confusing whirl of dancing forms

becomes visible to the strains of the Venusberg Music as Venus appears, reclining upon her couch, singing her delirious and seductive melody" (Cross, 366). When Wolfram pulls Tannhäuser's thoughts back from Venus to the pure love of Elisabeth, the vision of Venus disappears.

[43] See "Les Expériences du Dr. Crookes," 165-66.

[44] Ibid., 172.

[45] Ibid., 173.

[46] Ibid., 174.

[47] Ibid. J.-K. Huysmans refers to the experiments of Crookes in a very interesting passage on the paintings of Whistler. His description of Whistler's portrait of Miss Alexander strongly suggests the phantasmagoria:

> Ainsi que dans les autres oeuvres de M. Wisthler [sic], il y a, dans cette toile un coin supraterrestre, déconcertant. Certes, son personnage est ressemblant, est réel, cela est sûr; certes, il y a, en sus de sa chair, un peu de son caractère dans cette peinture, mais il y a aussi un côté surnaturel émané de ce peintre mystérieux, un peu spectral, qui justifie dans une certaine mesure, ce mot de spirite écrit par Desnoyers [dans sa description de La Fille Blanche de Whistler]. L'on ne peut, en effet, lire les révélations plus ou moins véridiques du docteur Crookes sur cette Katie, sur cette ombre incarnée en une forme dédoublée de femme tangible et pourtant fluide, sans songer à ces portraits de femmes de Wisthler, ces portraits-fantômes qui semblent reculer, vouloir s'enfoncer dans le mur, avec leurs yeux énigmatiques et leur bouche d'un rouge glacé, de goule.

(J.-K. Huysmans, "Wisthler," in Certains [Paris: Tresse & Stock, 1889], 69.)

[48] Among the educational uses Edison ponders for "L'Objectif, aidé du Phonographe (qui sont connexes)" (L'Eve, 45) is the reproduction of scenes of torture through the ages: "Quel enseignement!

salubre c'eût été dans les lycées, pour assainir l'intelligence des enfants modernes--et même des grandes personnes!--Quelle lanterne magique!"

[49] Villiers was prescient in the matter of Edison's talking motion pictures. L'Eve nouvelle appeared in 1880-1881; it reappeared as L'Eve future in 1885-1886. About the year 1880 Eadweard Muybridge [James Edward Muggeridge] invented what he called the Zoogyroscope, an instrument for projecting a series of sequential photographs of an animal that would create the illusion of movement. Muybridge approached Edison about the possibility of using the phonograph together with the Zoogyroscope "so as to combine and reproduce simultaneously, in the presence of an audience, visible actions and audible words" (quoted in Cook, 132). According to Cook, Muybridge and Edison discussed combining their inventions in 1883, but Robert Conot says their meeting took place in February 1888 (see Conot, 320). Edison and his assistants began work that year on a device for producing moving pictures and synchronizing them with sound. In October he filed a caveat on the kinetograph (for recording photographs) and the kinetoscope (for viewing them): "I am experimenting upon an instrument which does for the Eye what the phonograph does for the Ear, which is the recording and reproduction of things in motion, and in such a form as to be both Cheap practical and convenient" (quoted in Conot, 323).

The kinetoscope that was finally produced in 1890 replaced Muybridge's rigid photographic plates with perforated celluloid film strips. Edison's kinetoscope was thus an extremely important precursor of the modern movie projector, although, as Cook notes, it produced a very small image that made it impractical for use with large audiences. Conot's description of the effect produced when Edison's associate, William Dickson, experimented with showing the kinetoscope pictures on a screen is interesting in the present context: Dickson "achieved a projection about ten inches square. The projection room was draped in black, and there was a distinct aura of the supernatural as the lilliputian figures mysteriously appeared and disappeared" (Conot, 327).

[50] "Les Phantasmes de M. Redoux," in Histoires insolites, Oeuvres complètes, VI, 87.

[51] Ibid., 92, 91.

[52] Ibid., 94.

[53] Huneker, 14, 15. El-Ferenghy's magic lantern show has much in common with the shadow plays described by Cook in her chapters

"Far Eastern Shadows," "Karagöz," and "The Chinese Shades" (Cook, 47-80). The first of these chapters begins with an epigraph from Omar Khayyám:

> Far in and out, above, about, below,
> 'Tis nothing but a Magic Shadow-show,
> Played in a Box whose Candle is the Sun,
> Round which we Phantom Figures come and go. (Cook, 47)

[54] Huneker, 13.

[55] Bell seems to have been taken in by Villiers's phantasmagoria, as the English were by El-Ferenghy's. He accepts the tale as an "anecdote" concerning an actual incident experienced by Villiers (see Bell, 374-75). Bell has missed the clue Villiers himself provides: "When I was in Africa--don't stare, I've been all over the world--I found myself, some fifteen years ago, on the border of the Red Sea" (Huneker, 9). Villiers had been all over the world--in the same manner that Axël and Sara had been on their magnificent honeymoon trip, Samuel Wissler had been on his magic voyage with "Maria" (see _Elën_, in _Oeuvres complètes_, VIII, 266-72), and Huysmans's des Esseintes had been to London--in imagination only.

[56] _Letters_, 218.

[57] Ibid., 218-19.

[58] Finneran states that the text of _The Celtic Twilight_ included in _Mythologies_ (1959) is essentially the same as the text published in _Early Poems and Stories_ (1925). It is not, however, an exact reprint, but includes revisions made by Yeats on page proofs of the 1925 text and dated September 30 to October 26, 1931. Finneran believes the revisions were probably intended "for the abortive 'Coole Edition'" ("Yeats's Revisions in _The Celtic Twilight_," 98).

[59] _The Celtic Twilight_ (1912), 18-19; emphasis mine.

[60] Ibid., 17.

[61] _Memoirs_, 138.

[62] See also _A Vision_ (1925), 226; and Harper and Hood, Notes, 70.

[63] Raine, "Hades," 101. In the section of his Autobiographies entitled "The Trembling of the Veil," Yeats wonders about A.E.'s refusal "to examine and question his visions":

> Were they so much a part of his subconscious life that they would have vanished had he submitted them to question; were they like those voices that only speak, those strange sights that only show themselves for an instant, when the attention has been withdrawn; that phantasmagoria of which I had learnt something in London: and had his verse and his painting a like origin? (Autobiographies, 243)

The phantasmagoria to which Yeats refers here is that of the séance-room and similar spiritualist experiences.

[64] "Swedenborg," 45, 52.

[65] Ibid., 53.

[66] Ibid., 54.

[67] "Swedenborg," 55. A galanty (or galantee) show was a travelling magic lantern show which, according to Cook, in at least one form continued the ancient association of supernatural themes with the projection of images. The galantee show was frequently accompanied by the music of a hand organ. Perhaps thus began the tradition of musical accompaniment for the motion picture--a tradition that, although more evident in connection with silent movies, is nonetheless important to the "talkies." On the galantee show, see Cook, 81-85.

[68] See Villiers, "L'Ombre de Meyerbeer," ed. E. Drougard, L'Arche, 17 (juillet, 1946), 11n.

[69] Ibid., 3.

[70] Ibid., 9.

[71] Ibid., 10-11.

[72] Ibid., 11-12.

[73] "L'Ombre de Meyerbeer," 12. It is interesting that just before the narrator views the phantasmagoric projection of Meyerbeer's spirit, he hears "quelque chose qui ressemblait à la marche du Prophète jouée par un orchestre" (L'Arche, 12).

[74] Bloom discusses Per Amica Silentia Lunae in some detail in his Chapter 12, 178-89.

[75] Yeats writes in the Epilogue to Per Amica Silentia Lunae of his attendance at the première of Axël, "I hoped to recognise the moment when Axël cries: 'I know that lamp, it was burning before Solomon'" (Per Amica, 368). Bloom notes that "In the total structure of Yeats's work, Per Amica Silentia Lunae serves as introduction to the visionary center, to the later poems in The Wild Swans at Coole, and to Michael Robartes and the Dancer, Four Plays for Dancers, and A Vision itself" (Bloom, 178). It is strange, then, that commentators are generally silent on the significance of the title of Per Amica Silentia Lunae except to remark in passing that it comes from the Aeneid (II, 1.255). Yeats obviously attached a certain importance to the phrase, for he repeats it in fuller form in the structural centre of the work: the introductory section of "Anima Mundi" (Per Amica, 343). It would seem that "Per Amica silentia lunae" is one of the "sensuous images or exciting phrases" that Yeats delighted in because they display "great problems" (Per Amica, 343). Yeats relates the phrase directly to himself: "I . . . have put myself to school where all things are seen: A Tenedo tacitae per amica silentia lunae" (Per Amica, 343). The Yeatsian context connects the phrase both with "anima hominis," the individual mind, and with "anima mundi," "the general mind" (Per Amica, 343). In the Virgilian context, the phrase has a certain grim irony: Aeneas is describing the approach of the Greek army just prior to the penetration and destruction of Troy. The friendly silence of the mute moon, then, contributes to the destruction of an old civilization. This destruction eventually, after the peregrinations of Aeneas, results in the birth of a new civilization. In the Aeneid, the silent moon casts an especially interesting shadow: the shade of Hector appears to Aeneas in a vision, urges him to flee the burning towers of Troy, and prophesies his role in the establishment of the new era (see Aeneid, II, 11.268-95).

[76] Bloom, 178.

[77] Per Amica, 321.

[78] Bloom, 179.

[79] Per Amica, 334.

[80] Ibid., 331.

[81] Ibid., 357.

[82] Ibid.; emphasis mine. See also "A Meditation in Time of War" (1920): "One is animate/Mankind inanimate phantasy" (Poems, 406).

[83] Per Amica, 356n.

[84] These particular uses of the term phantasmagoria by Yeats have caused some critical comment, the first coming in 1919 from J. Middleton Murry in "Mr. Yeats' Swan Song." Murry attacks The Wild Swans at Coole precisely because, "on the poet's word and the evidence of our search, we . . . find phantasmagoria, ghostly symbols of a truth which cannot be otherwise conveyed, at least by Mr. Yeats" (Murry, 9). Murry acknowledges that the poet, although "driven to approach the highest reality he can apprehend," cannot "transcribe it" without recourse to myth "as a foundation upon which he can explicate his imagination" (Murry, 9). This myth may be the poet's own creation, but it must, Murry insists, be intelligible to others. He believes that Yeats has failed in this task and, therefore, lies open to "the charge of idle dreaming" (Murry, 10).

By the time Richard Ellmann first published The Identity of Yeats in 1954, it was clear that, in Sidnell's words, "What Murry seized as the evidence of Yeats's poetic inanition, the intercourse with phantasmagoria, was, of course, the opening of a splendid phase in Yeats's work, not the sterile conclusion to it" (Sidnell, "Mr. Yeats, Michael Robartes," 227). Thus Ellmann was much more positive than Murry in his assessment of the significance of phantasmagoria in Yeats's work. For Yeats, Ellmann wrote, phantasmagoria designated

> that structure of related images through which he could express himself, and through which, as he later said, "the dream and the reality" might "face one another in visible array". What was personal and transitory might be welded with what was imper-

> sonal and permanent through a group of images which had attracted men for hundreds of years. These images were phantasmagoric not in that they were illusory, but in that they represented, more than they participated in, the secret essences of things. (Ellmann, Identity, 62)

[85] Sidnell considers "the relations between actuality and fiction" in the later works revolving around Michael Robartes. See "Mr. Yeats, Michael Robartes," passim.

[86] Autobiographies, 306.

[87] "Modern Poetry," 500-01.

[88] "A General Introduction," 509n.

[89] Ibid., 509-10. Discussing this passage, Bloom states that "there is no escape from or evasion of personality in this phantasmagoria, which is indeed precisely what Blake and Pater called 'vision' and the other major Romantics the Secondary or creative Imagination" (Bloom, 179-80). Bloom describes the conclusion of the passage as "the most powerful and self-confident proclamation of the High Romantic imagination made in our time" (Bloom, 180).

[90] Mallarmé, "Autobiographie," 663.

[91] Cook, 101.

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